

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

BANESTORM™

ABYDOS™

Hidden City, Forbidden Lore



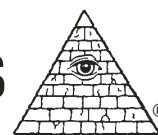
Written by **DAVID PULVER** Edited by **NIKOLA VRTIS**
Illustrated by **GUY BURWELL, DAN SMITH, and BENJAMIN WILLIAMS**

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3	After the Lady	19	St. Martha's Road	38
<i>Content Warning</i>	3	Recent Events	19	Northgate Street	38
<i>About GURPS</i>	3			Old Temple Road	39
<i>About the Author</i>	3			Opal Lane	39
1. HISTORY AND		2. ORGANIZATIONS	20	Slaughter Row	40
CULTURE	4	DEFENDERS OF THE CITY	20	Tanners' Row	40
GEOGRAPHY	4	The Ravens	20	Vat Road	40
Mana Level	4	The Legion of		Venture Street	40
GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH	5	the Polished Bone	21	Verdandi Road	41
Government	5	The Northland Guard	21	THE TWINS	41
The Church of Lazarus	6	Knights and Militia	22	The Cathedral of St. Lazarus	41
<i>The Biblical Lazarus</i>	6	HOLY ORDERS	22	The Citadel of Birds	42
Other Religions in Abydos	7	The Priesthood	22	The Silent Maze	42
POPULATION	8	<i>Privateers and Gentlemen</i>	22	THE RIVER CHARON	43
Ethnicity	8	The Hand of Glory	23	Charon Bridge	43
Status and Social Class	8	The Order of the Holy Blood	23	<i>River Reeks</i>	43
FOREIGN RELATIONS		The Poor Brothers		GEBURA TOWN	44
AND DEFENSE	9	of St. Judas Iscariot	23	The Docks	44
<i>Health and Disease</i>	9	The Sisters of Magdalene	24	Anchor Street	44
Megalos	10	ST. MAGDALENE'S COLLEGE	24	Bridgegate Road	45
Thulin's Folk	10	Admission	24	Northmen's Block	45
The Nomad Lands and		Curriculum and Degrees	24	St. Samuel's Street	45
Ravensmarch	10	The Faculty	25	St. Stephen's Street	45
Other Nations of Yrth	10	The Student Body	25	THE MONASTERY OF	
Foreign Visitors	10	The Flesh Library	26	THE HOLY BLOOD	45
<i>Views of Abydos in Megalos</i>	10	<i>The Life of a Flesh Scroll</i>	26		
The Defenses	11	GUILDS	27		
ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY	12	The Alchemists' Guild	27	4. CHARACTERS AND	
Taxes and Tithes	12	The Eumenides Guild	27	CAMPAIGNS	46
Coin of the Realm	12	Lich Merchants' Guild	28	CHARACTERS	46
Tech Level	12	The Corpseflyers' Guild	28	Archbishop Narses	
LAND OF NECROMANCY	12	CRIMINALS, GANGS,		the Pious	46
A Long-Lived Aristocracy	12	AND REBELS	28	Lady Raven Gabrielle	
A Quiet Land	13	Blood of the Martyrs	28	Boneshanks	47
LAW AND JUSTICE	14	The Naglfari	29	Praetor Basil Stephanos	48
Magic and the Law	14	The Roofrats	29	Senator Donovan Hawk	49
Carrying Arms	14			Raven Captain	
Duels	14	3. THE CITY	30	Anastasia Psilena	49
Violations of Canon Law	14	WALLS AND TOWERS	30	Brother Demetrios	
Law Enforcement	14	Gates	30	the Icon Painter	50
Punishments	15	THE OLD CITY	32	Guildmaster Tobias Ghent	51
CUSTOMS AND CULTURE	15	Ambrose Street	32	Doctor Sabelia,	
Fine Arts	15	Andronicus Road	32	the Head Librarian	51
Theater	16	Bethlehem Road	32	Master Prospectus Blake	52
Holidays and Festivals	16	Celestine Road	32	Megethia Andronica	53
Stylites	16	Cobble Road	33	Edward Hook	54
CHRONOLOGY:		Clay Street and Bogiron Alley	33	Ogmund Snorrison	54
YEARS OF THE CITY	16	St. Dunstan's Row	33	Ragnar Bjornsson,	
Nicasia Ravenjoy	17	Enoch Road	33	Hanged Man	55
The Coming of the Lazarites	17	<i>The Dogs of Abydos</i>	33	RESIDENT EVILS	56
<i>The Historical Abydos</i>	17	The Garden of Tenelope	34	Glittertooth	56
The Civil War	18	Fowlmarket Road	34	The Cat Fairy	57
Faith and Alliances	18	Grendel Road	34	Hellkittens	57
Against the Empire	18	Gorice Road	35	<i>The Cat Fairy's</i>	
End of an Era	19	Hourglass Road	35	<i>Pregnancy Spells</i>	57
		Kadia's Way	35	ADVENTURES IN ABYDOS	58
		Lich Street	36		
		Lostgate Road	37	INDEX	60
		St. Magdalene's Road	38		

INTRODUCTION

Content Warning

GURPS Banestorm: Abydos describes a culture wherein the living interact with the dead in ways that most readers would deem “intimate” and/or “disrespectful,” and thus inappropriate. These elements may offend some readers. Please consider your gaming group’s sensibilities before introducing this material into your campaign.

Rumors say the darkest city in Megalos lies somewhere near Lake Styx. These tales of a shadowed city of necromancers and zombies are discouraged by the Church. Some who seek it out either vanish or return stating with impressive certainty that it does not exist. The few supposedly reliable texts on the subject have been suppressed . . .

– **GURPS Banestorm**

GURPS Banestorm: Abydos reveals the secrets of Abydos, a legendary city in the north of Megalos. Ruled by Christian mages who believe that raising the dead is the highest

sacrament, its inhabitants are denounced by their neighbors as the foulest of heretics. The city’s very name is often removed from maps and documents lest its infection spread among the faithful!

Abydos may exist as a sinister citadel for heroic adventurers to penetrate. Alternatively, it may be home to a group that uses swords and necromancy to protect their fellow citizens from foreign threats and resident evils, or soldiers in a street-level war for control of the city’s underworld.

Set in Yrth, the world of **GURPS Banestorm**, this sourcebook includes a street-by-street description of the city of Abydos, and extensive details on its unusual society and institutions, including the undead Deathless Monks, a Viking Mafia, and the notorious Flesh Library.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance writer and game designer based in Victoria, British Columbia. He is the co-author of the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**, and author of **Transhuman Space**, the **GURPS Spaceships** series, *Big Eyes, Small Mouth, 2nd Edition*, and numerous other gaming books.

About GURPS

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

GURPS System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH
Page Design ■ PHIL REED and
JUSTIN DE WITT

Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED
Art Director ■ WILL SCHOONOVER
Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

Marketing Director ■ PAUL CHAPMAN
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
Errata Coordinator ■ FADE MANLEY
GURPS FAQ Maintainer ■
VICKY “MOLOKH” KOLENKO

Playtesters: Steven Anderson, Mark Cogan, Brian Cook, David Cooper, Harold Carmer, David Cunnius, Peter V. Dell’Orto, Leonardo Holschuh, Melanie M. Harris, John Karakash, Jonas Karlsson, Jason Levine, Phil Masters, Matthew Michalak, John W. Nowak, Sean Punch, Scott Raun, Tracy Ratcliff, T. Carter Ross, Robert Scheiner, David Summers, Chad Underkoffler, Michael Wilson

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY AND CULTURE

In the Lake of Styx is a dark and wicked city, and there the most foul doctrines are formulated and allowed to breed. These heretics claim that Lazarus of Bethany was secretly ordained by Jesus Christ to lead the Holy Church, somehow having deluded themselves into believing that the Lord's raising of Lazarus from the dead conveyed some special blessing upon him.

– Bishop Anselm, *On the Lazarite Heresy* (Megalos, 1897)

Abydos, also known as the City of Shadows, lies on the isle of Agartha in the great Lake Styx, on the border between the Empire of Megalos and the Nomad Lands. The city's name appears on few maps. It has been under the Interdict of the Church for centuries, and except in the north, many believe its very existence is only a legend.

The city of Abydos was founded in the 12th century (see *Chronology: Years of the City*, pp. 16-19), but its current infamy dates to 1551, when the Empire of Megalos was torn by civil war. Caught on the losing side, the city found itself besieged. Facing starvation and disease, the desperate city elders resorted to the aid of its most powerful resident, the necromancer Nicasia Ravenjoy. Using her art, Ravenjoy ended the plagues and raised the city's dead to defend the walls. Her price was the rule of the city.

Ravenjoy was an excellent administrator. Sorcery was the cornerstone of her rule, but she made no new conquests. She ruled with an even mix of terror and mercy for two prosperous centuries. Her eccentric reign and her support of the sect of Christian heretics known as the Lazarites established the unusual customs of the city, which persist to this day.

GEOGRAPHY

Lake Styx is a vast freshwater lake, the second largest inland body of water in the continent of Ytarria. Like the northern ports of Megalos, the Styx is partly icebound during the winter. The north coast of the lake is iced in, while the south coast and the shores of Agartha freeze during midwinter. The center of the lake is free of packed ice, but with the treacherous conditions and the icy wind, few are willing to venture out in winter.

Agartha is the largest island in the Styx. Its outlines appear on most maps of Ytarria, though the name of the island and the city are often omitted. Agartha has an area of about 2,000 square miles, divided into four counties: Lemures, Sardis, Tenemos, and Zeldornia.

Lemures is the southern half of the coast. Most of Lemures is fertile farmland. The mouth of the island's largest waterway, the Charon, is on the Lemures coast and is navigable by ships for two miles inland. The city of Abydos and the island's main

port are located a mile up the Charon. Many prosperous farms line both river banks.

Sardis is the hilly land east of the Charon. The economy is dominated by sheep and goat herding, as well as small iron and silver mines owned by the state.

Tenemos is the northern arc of coastline. Much of it is heavily forested, with deer, bear, wild pigs, wolves, unicorns, and a few ragged bands of bandits. Many gentry hunt this land.

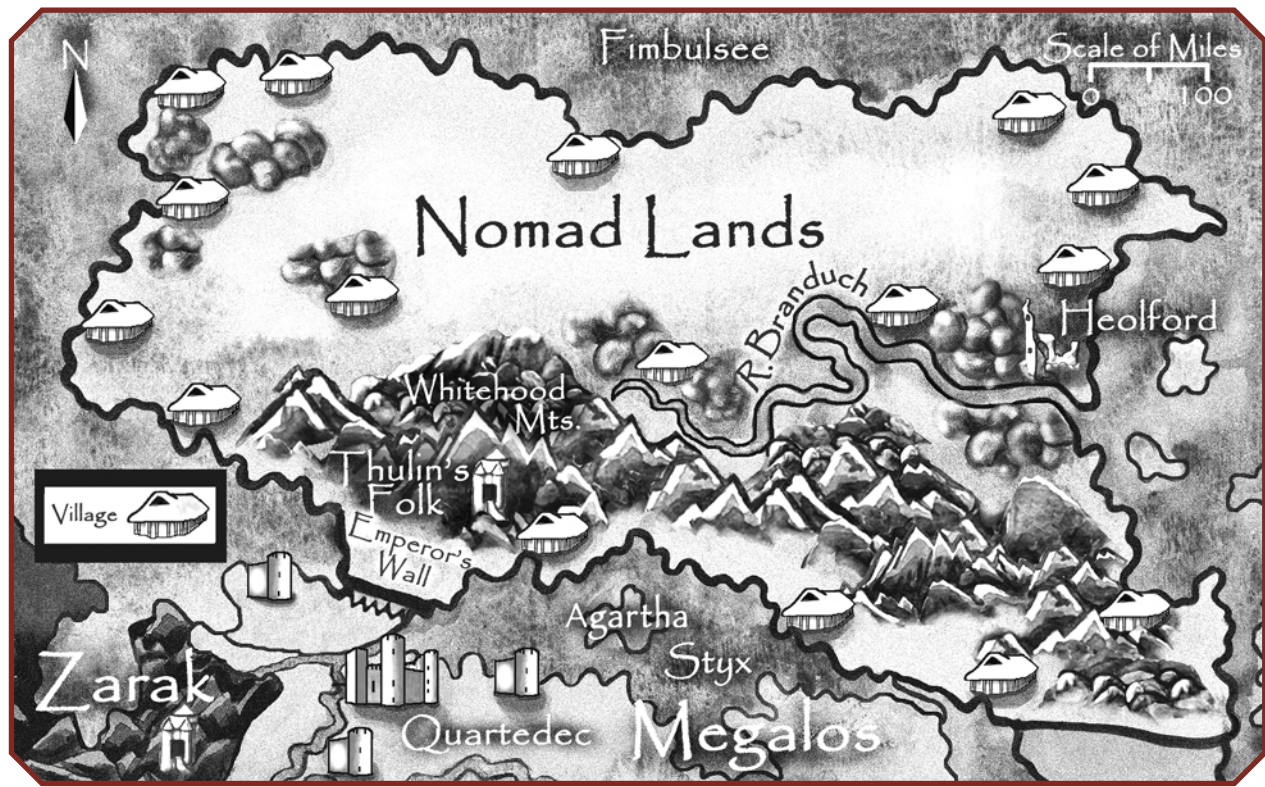
Zeldornia is the land inland and west of the River Charon. It is open farmland and light woods, dotted with numerous small hamlets and the manor houses of the gentry.

MANA LEVEL

Like most of Yrth, the island of Agartha has normal mana. However, centuries of necromantic practice have caused the entire land to become *death-affected* with a strength of 1 across most of the island, and 2 in the city of Abydos itself.

Death-affected mana adds its strength to the effective skill of Necromantic spells and all other spells that do *direct* harm (e.g., Melee spells and most harmful Body Control spells, but *not* Missile spells). It subtracts its strength from the effective skill of all Healing spells (except those that also belong to the Necromantic college). For a more detailed explanation of affected mana, see *GURPS Fantasy*, pp. 43-44.

Rumors suggest the darkest city in Megalos lies somewhere near Lake Styx.



GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH

We of Abydos are Christians, but foreigners call us Lazarite heretics. This is because foreigners dispute that the Son of God did resurrect Lazarus of Bethany from the dead to be his true prophet, and deny He taught magic to his disciples. Nor do they follow the Renewed Testament, instead believing the lies of the betrayers Peter and Paul, who suppressed the Gospel of Lazarus and the Books of Mary, Martha, and Judas that reveal the Hidden Truth.

The coming of the True Faith to our city dates to the arrival of Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy. Her entourage included the monk St. Samuel Hood, who many simple folk now believe was St. Lazarus in disguise. Their arrival saved the city from the ungodly and brought low the false Church, which had been dominated by the wicked ways of bishops from Megalos.

In those days, there were many unbelievers within our city, but the truth of St. Samuel's message was made manifest when God vouchsafed the Lady Ravenjoy's victory against the Megalan heretics. By God's grace, even those who remained firm in their heresy served the cause of the godly. While their souls went to Hell, their bodies rose up to defend the city walls against the Enemies of Truth.

Today, all Agartha embraces the Renewed Testament, though the world beyond the Styx remains firm in its unbelief.

*– Letter from Brother Demetrios to
Rabbi Isaac ben Joseph, 2008*

GOVERNMENT

Abydos is an aristocratic republic with a powerful clergy, in some ways similar to Italian city-states of the Renaissance.

Executive power is wielded by an elected mayor called the praetor. The praetor controls the city treasury, sets foreign policy, and may veto laws not passed by a two-thirds majority in the senate. The current praetor is Lord Basil Stephanos (pp. 48-49). The praetor also appoints two city and six county court judges.

The praetor is assisted by the *Lady Raven*, the female commander of the Ravens (pp. 14-15), Abydos' elite city guard. The successor to Lady Ravenjoy, the first Protector of Abydos, the Lady Raven is a powerful mage who leads the city's police and military forces. She is invested by law and custom with extensive legal-enforcement power, especially during war or civil disorder. She can call up the city's undead legions and is charged with defending "the true faith and the law and custom of the city."

Legislative power is held by the senate of Abydos. Its 28 senators make laws, set taxes, and approve treaties and declarations of war. Six senate seats are reserved for the archbishop and five bishops. The other senators are elected – six from Abydos, and four each from Agartha's four rural counties. The rural senators tend to be rich country gentry, while the urban senators are a mix of gentry, wealthy merchants, and mages.

The Lady Raven serves until she wishes to retire or dies in office, while the praetor and senate are elected for terms of six years. A third of the senate is elected every two years (in October), so there is theoretically a regular turnover, but there are no term limits and many officials end up serving for decades.

The franchise is restricted to citizens whose declared wealth (for annual taxes) is \$5,000 or more. Voters are known as *electors*. Electors can vote for a senator from the county they paid taxes in, and for praetor. Only electors can run for office.

THE CHURCH OF LAZARUS

Lazarus and Martha arrived in a town called Arminium in Gaul to preach the Good News. There, people came to listen to them tell how Jesus had risen from the dead. Many gathered in the square, and this angered the town's magistrate, a Roman named Lucius Rufus. He sent his soldiers to arrest Lazarus and his new friends. This caused a riot in which many believers were cut down, and in the confusion, a fire began in the market. It burned so hot that people could not get close to put it out. Even the governor's house caught fire. He said, "This is all the fault of Lazarus, and his talk of Jesus. But where are his eager followers, now that the town is burning?"

Lazarus heard this and said, "My friends cannot answer, for your soldiers slew them. But if you give me my staff and let me walk among them, maybe they will forgive you in Jesus' name." Lucius Rufus agreed, and Lazarus went among the dead, touching their heads and murmuring words that Jesus had taught him. And lo! They rose up, entering the burning houses and began beating out the flames, even though their bodies crisped black. Soon the fire was out, and the dead formed a guard around Lazarus, and the Roman magistrate was very afraid. But after seeing these miracles, the people of Arminium acclaimed Jesus as their messiah, and the magistrate fell down at Lazarus' feet and joined with the believers in prayer.

– *The Renewed Testament, Book of Martha (12:5-12:9)*

The Lazarite Church is a Christian heresy, founded in the 16th century by a renegade Thomasite monk known as Samuel Hood. The Church of Lazarus believes in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and hold He died on the cross to atone for mankind's sins, then rose three days later and ascended into Heaven. They believe in the Trinity who is Three-in-One, in Original Sin, and the reality of Heaven and

Hell. They espouse all the Christian virtues and condemn the Seven Deadly Sins.

What makes them heretics in the eyes of the mainstream Church is their teachings. The Lazarites believe a work called the *Renewed Testament* is a true part of the Bible. These works, supposedly found by St. Samuel Hood, describe the "Lost Gospels of Lazarus" in which Lazarus of Bethany, the man Jesus raised from the dead, is a central figure. They claim the Lost Gospels were written by Lazarus himself, Martha of Bethany, and Mary Magdalene.

According to this *Renewed Testament*, a private meeting took place between Jesus and Lazarus, in which Jesus explained that he had raised Lazarus to be his right hand, giving him secret knowledge denied to the other disciples. After Jesus' death and resurrection, there was a dispute between Lazarus and Peter, and Lazarus left Jerusalem for a lengthy missionary journey accompanied by Mary Magdalene. He traveled into Western Europe, where he preached and performed many miracles. His final fate is not recorded in the gospels, but many Lazarites claim that he was immortal, and that he survived to be brought to Yrth by the Banestorm, arriving first in the Nomad Lands and then journeying south. This explains the presence of the *Renewed Testament* in Agarthia.

Doctrine and Holy Orders

The Church of Lazarus believes their sacred scriptures prove animation of dead is a holy and righteous act. According to the key passage in the *Renewed Testament* quoted above, Lazarus used zombies to benefit the Church and the civic good. Other books of the *Renewed Testament* describe him teaching his followers these arts, and even raising zombies to rebuild Christian churches after they were destroyed by pagans.

The Biblical Lazarus

Two different men named Lazarus appear in the New Testament. One was a leper, described in a parable that demonstrates how the virtuous poor can enter Heaven while rich sinners risk Hell.

The other was Lazarus of Bethany, whose story is told in John, Chapter 11. He was the brother of Mary of Bethany and Martha, two close friends and later followers of Jesus. According to the Bible, a short time before Passover, Lazarus fell ill, and his sisters asked Jesus for help. Jesus delayed, telling them the final result of the illness would not be the death of Lazarus but the glory of God. A few days later, Jesus informed his disciples that Lazarus was dead, but that he would wake him. They journeyed to Bethany and found Lazarus already buried. Jesus wept to see Mary and Martha so upset. He went to the tomb and in a loud voice said, "Lazarus, come out" . . . and Lazarus rose from the dead.

This miracle (one of a very few people who Jesus raised from the dead) renewed his disciples' faith, but it also convinced the authorities he was dangerous, and

within a few days, they made the plans that led to his arrest and crucifixion.

The New Testament does not mention Lazarus of Bethany again. The role that the Church of Lazarus in Yrth assigns him is, of course, not found in any Earth scriptures. Various Earth legends do suggest different fates for him. The most colorful is an unsupported tradition that dates back to ninth-century France. According to this story, Mary Magdalene took Martha and Lazarus with her on a perilous missionary journey into Europe, ending up in what is now the French town of Marseilles. They preached the gospel and had various encounters, including Martha's defeat (through prayer) of a legendary dragon known as the Tarasque.

Historically, Christian tradition did not limit miraculous power over the dead to Jesus alone: In early Christian writings, many of his apostles also became near-supermen whose miracles matched or exceeded Christ himself! For example, the apocryphal Acts of John (second century A.D.) record the apostle John performing numerous resurrections . . . and even granting that power to a female follower.

The Church of Lazarus claims that practicing necromancy is a road to understanding the promise of eternal life. Today, many Lazarite priests are necromancers, and the Church has founded St. Magdalene's College to teach that art. They believe it does no harm to body or soul. According to Lazarite doctrine, flesh is only clay, and when the Day of Judgment comes, those without bodies will be given new ones formed out of air. All adults will be in perfect health, 35 years old, the same age as Jesus at the crucifixion.

Organization

The Lazarite Church is overseen by the Archbishop of Abydos, who is presently Narses the Pious. Five bishops and several abbots and abbesses supervise 2,700 priests, monks, and nuns. The archbishop's seat is in the Cathedral of St. Lazarus in Abydos.

Besides their core doctrines regarding necromancy and the importance of Lazarus, many other customs of the Lazarite Church put them at odds with the majority of Yrth's Christians (governed by the Curia). Some of these differences are detailed below.

Holy Rites and Icons: When Orthodox Greeks arrived on Agartha in 1190, they brought with them their own Eastern Rite traditions. These included the use of Greek rather than Latin as the liturgical language, and the veneration of icons (holy images, such as paintings of biblical figures and saints). These practices were continued by the Lazarite Church after it rose to dominance in the region.

Death: In ideal circumstances, a Lazarite Christian's body is supposed to be left to lie in state for two days in a church or tomb. After that, it may be animated, resurrected, or buried. In emergencies, a priest may permit a body to be raised earlier. Only the wealthy bury corpses, usually in private tombs. The corpses of the poor are turned into zombies to help around their family home or business, or sold to landowners or monasteries to labor in the fields. Abydos has few cemeteries!

Resurrections: A Resurrection spell is only permitted if presided over by a bishop or archbishop of the Church. This is because a resurrection is considered to entail retrieving a soul from heaven (however, animating a corpse does involve its soul). The Church will only resurrect individuals if it believes doing so is necessary for the preservation of the faith. Very few individuals know the Resurrection spell, though a limited version, False Resurrection (p. 27) is more common.

Canon Law: The majority of the laws and regulations of the Lazarite Church are drawn from the mainstream Christianity, but they do not specifically follow the Domitian code used by Christian Churches in Megalos, Cardiel, and Caithness (as this code was not formulated until some 30 years after the Lazarite break with the Curia).

Church Saints

The Lazarites recognize the same saints that the mainstream Christian Church did up to 1550, but they show special reverence for St. Martha and St. Mary Magdalene. Unique Lazarite saints include:

St. Lazarus the Renewer: The man raised by Jesus from the dead, and in the Lazarite Church, the patron saint of necromancy. (He should not be confused with another St. Lazarus

recognized by both churches, who, among other things, is the patron saint of lepers.)

St. Judas Iscariot: The patron saint of those who repent of their crimes and seek forgiveness.

St. Samuel Hood: The founder of the Lazarite Church and patron of Abydos.

St. Gilli Oakenbeard: The first dwarf to convert to the Lazarite doctrine, he forged the great bell of St. Lazarus' Cathedral. St. Gilli returned to the Whitehood Mountains as a missionary (without much luck, it must be said). He was martyred while attempting to convert a dragon to the True Faith, and canonized in 1844. Patron saint of dwarves and church bells.

OTHER RELIGIONS IN ABYDOS

Abydos' northern location has resulted in next to no contact with Islam, aside from a few very adventurous merchants, but pockets of other faiths exist in the city.

Petrine Christians

Ironically, the Church of Lazarus has a good deal in common with the rest of the Church. They believe Christianity is the only true religion, hold to the Nicene Creed, and will not tolerate heretics. However, the Church of Lazarus considers the Curia – the ruling body of the Christian Church on Yrth – to be corrupt due to its unwillingness to recognize the truth of the Renewed Testament. The Lazarites refer to the mainstream church as the “Petrine heresy” (after St. Peter, who they claim unfairly usurped the place of Lazarus in Christian doctrine) and pray that someday they will see the light.

Naturally, the mainstream “Petrine” Church considers the Lazarites to be vile and deluded heretics. Their official position is that the detested Renewed Testament was in fact written by Samuel Hood himself, sometime between 1530 and 1540, probably under diabolical influence. Christian scholars who have studied the Lazarites assert that in the years after Hood's death, the Lazarite Church was carefully molded and warped by its protector, the necromancer Nicasia Ravenjoy, to create a doctrine that supported her wicked ways.

In 1548, the Curia excommunicated Father Samuel Hood and his followers, and declared all Lazarite teachings a heresy and the Renewed Testament a forgery. In 1559, they excommunicated Nicasia Ravenjoy, and in 1560, placed all of Agartha under an interdict. Since then, the Curia has helped organize a number of crusades against the Lazarites.

In turn, the Petrine Church was outlawed in Abydos. However, as many as a thousand believers remain, meeting secretly in small congregations in hidden churches both in the city and in the wilds of Agartha. Naturally, this is not tolerated by the Church of Lazarus, and “Petrine heretics” are hunted by its inquisition, the Hand of Glory. The suffering of these persecuted Christians, like martyrs of old, gives ammunition to those factions in the Curia who want a renewed crusade against Abydos. The Olybrian monks, Templars, and Hospitallers all send agents into Abydos with the purpose of supporting (or stirring up) the Petrine community. Blood of the Martyrs (pp. 28-29), a small but active Petrine resistance group, continues to fight the Lazarite Church.

Jews

Abydos has a small Jewish community clustered around a single synagogue. Most Jews in Abydos are merchants or craftsmen. They tend to keep to themselves in Abydos even more than in other cities. Rabbis in Abydos refer to the city's many undead as "qlippoth" – empty shells animated by negative and evil forces – and see them as connected to negative emanations of the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

Those Jews who remain in Abydos do so because they lived there before the coming of Ravenjoy. Should they abandon the synagogue and let the city fall entirely into darkness?

Also, life is not so bad. Since the Curia bans Christian merchants from commerce with the "Lazarite heretics," the Jews are a valued link that maintains communication between Abydos, Caithness, and Megalos; they do much business with the Northlanders and dwarves that come through the city. Abydos has had some outbreaks of anti-semitism, but its senate recognizes the commercial advantage in guaranteeing the Jews freedom of worship, and the courts punish anyone disturbing their peace.

Pagans

Slaves from the semi-civilized north coast of the Styx ("Northlanders") brought paganism to Abydos in the 13th century. Most resident Northlanders in Abydos and even some living in the bordering Nomad Lands have long since converted to Lazarite Christianity, but a few families secretly keep some form of pagan faith alive. To escape persecution, most Northlander pagans tend to publicly attend Lazarite services, while privately maintaining their real faith.

This faith is most often Norse paganism, especially worship of Odin, whose status as god of the dead is seen as especially appropriate in Abydos. However, over the years, the pure strain of Norse paganism has mutated into a mixture of Odin worship, necromancy, and Lazarite Christianity (similar to the way Voodoo combined West African and Christian elements). Some of these worshippers even believe that Samuel Hood was actually Odin in disguise, and that the Ravens are his (witting or otherwise) Valkyrie servants incarnate in mortal form.

POPULATION

The city of Abydos has a population of 22,000 souls, and over twice as many without souls. Most of its inhabitants are human, along with a few dwarves. There are 90,000 more people living in rural villages in the Agarthan countryside, supported by many times that number of undead. The country gentry build tall stone towers as their manor houses, although a few wealthy baronets have small castles.

ETHNICITY

Agartha's human population is made up of three main ethnic groups, two of which are now blended.

Agarthans

The original population consisted of Greek-speaking inhabitants of what is now Turkey, in the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. They were brought directly to Agartha by the Banestorm. Their numbers were swelled by emigrants from northern Megalos, who were ethnically and culturally Western European (including a few European Jews). The Megalans came to Agartha in large numbers while it was still part of the Megalan Empire. Today, both groups have become a single "Agarthan" people. They speak English with a faint Greek accent, and they tend toward dark hair. The family names of gentry and upper commons often mix and match Byzantine Greek, Latin, and European elements, e.g., Destasia Montague. Others are indistinguishable from Megalan names.

Northlanders

Northlanders are descended from inhabitants of the Nomad Lands. The first Northlanders were slaves captured during wars between the Nomads and Megalos (when Abydos was part of the Empire). The slave trade ended in the 17th century when they were granted their freedom, but most chose to stay in the city. Abydos' trade with the Nomad Lands territory along

the north of Lake Styx led to further assimilation. Over the centuries, many immigrant Northlanders have arrived each year to join relatives already in the city, seek higher paying work, or enlist in the Northland Guard.

Northlanders presently make up about a quarter of the city's population and, like the Agarthans, form a distinct ethnic group. Most are fair skinned with light brown, blond, or red hair. They speak English with a "Northland" accent, and have last names ending in -sson (son of) or -sdotter (daughter of). While there are no legal barriers against a Northlander rising in Status or marrying an Agarthan, they are viewed as "uncultured" by most Agarthans. The majority are poor to lower-middle class, and they generally marry their own people. They have Social Stigma (Minority Group).

STATUS AND SOCIAL CLASS

Thanks to the centuries-long influence of the Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy and her deliberate cultivation of female warriors and mages for the Ravens and the Magdalene order, as well as the prominence given in Lazarite doctrine to women apostles, Agarthan society is more sexually egalitarian than almost anywhere else on Yrth. Agarthan inheritance laws give estates to the widow or widower, then to the eldest child. The Lazarite Church still does not allow women priests, but its nuns have great influence.

Gentry

Agartha has no barons or earls – they were all exiled or killed when Abydos broke away from Megalos in the 16th century. Its aristocrats are landed knights (Status 2) and baronets (Status 3) who own large country estates and manors. The manor, estate, and title go to the eldest legitimate child. The other children are considered upper commoners and are Status 1.

Public officials can become gentry. They gain Status 2 if a senator or judge, 3 if Lady Raven, or 4 if praetor. If they had higher Status, they keep that instead. After retiring, Status drops by one or to their original level, whichever is better.

Gentry have certain privileges. They may not be flogged for a crime, and they may wear a sword and ride a horse within the city. However, while the titles of knight or baronet remain, there is no longer a feudal system; neither owes fealty to higher lords.

Commoners

A commoner is a free man or woman who isn't gentry or clergy. Commoners are divided into two classes.

Upper commons are commoners rich enough to be classed as electors and able to vote, and extends to their immediate family. This includes most master merchants and craftsmen, their families, respected professionals, those with college degrees, and those children of the gentry who did not inherit their parent's estate. All are Status 1.

Lower commons are other commoners – ordinary farmers, servants, sailors, journeymen, etc. They are Status 0 if they have decent jobs; Status -1 for bondservants, poor apprentices, and serfs; Status -2 for street beggars or the homeless.

Clergy and Religious

The clergy's Status is independent of family. Within Abydos, an ordinary Lazarite priest, monk, nun, or Jewish rabbi has Status 1. An abbot, abbess, or senior priest or nun (especially one with Magery 2+) has Status 2. A bishop has Status 3, and the archbishop has Status 4.

Slaves

The bottom rung of society are the slaves (Status -2). In the years since Ravenjoy's rule, the slave population has declined. Many were freed to defend the city, becoming lower

Health and Disease

Over the centuries, most Agarthans who survive to adulthood have acquired immunity (see *Differential Susceptibility* and *Natural Immunity*, p. B443) to the particular corpse-borne diseases indigenous to this region of Yrth. However, in a grittier fantasy campaign, the GM may wish to acknowledge the health hazards that exposure to walking corpses might bring, and have foreign visitors check periodically for Contagion (p. B443), at least during their first few weeks in the city! Details and severity are up to the GM; it's generally more fun for the campaign to have the adventurers to feel sick for a few days then be mortally ill.

commoners. Their place in the economy has been taken over by the undead.

Agartha still has a few thousand slaves, kept mainly as domestic servants, concubines, or necromantic energy sources. The chief sources of slaves are criminals, debtors, and captives (mostly Petrine Christians taken by raiding privateers).

Slavery in Abydos is like that of Megalos. Slaves are property, their treatment depends on their owner's kindness, and the children of a slave are born as slaves. Some slaves are owned by the Church or by monasteries rather than by individuals.

Killing or abusing one's own slave is not a crime, although unnecessary cruelty may get one shunned in polite society. Abusing or killing another's slave is a crime against property.

There are too few slaves to mount an effective rebellion, but slaves do run away. There is no abolitionist movement, but a Petrine Christian slave may be hidden by other Petrine Christians. Recaptured runaway slaves are flogged, branded on the arm or thigh with the city's raven-head seal, then returned to their owners, who may do with them as they please. Often they are executed, then reanimated as zombies.

"I've heard of this city of the dead filled with heretics somewhere to the north. What's it called? Abydos or Abbadon or some foreign name."

"Quiet! My second cousin's nephew's uncle worked for a dwarf who knew a merchant who traded with them and was hanged as a heretic."

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND DEFENSE

The Christian Curia consider Abydos to be a poisonous nest of heretics that deserve to be purged with fire and sword. On three occasions, the Curia has roused the Empire of Megalos to lend knights and legions for crusades in a so far fruitless attempt to achieve this. The Curia has also placed Abydos under an interdict, and the Church discourages God-fearing Christian merchants from trading or even speaking of the city.

Meanwhile, its agents, particularly the Jesuits and Templars, work to support factions that oppose the Lazarites' rule. This has been successful enough that people outside the northern reaches of the Empire of Megalos believe Abydos to be little more than a legend. Ironically, a side effect of this has been to reduce pressure for any new crusade.

Views of Abydos in Megalos

Abydos is well known in the north of Megalos, but it is rarely referred to by that name, which is considered unlucky to say or write. Out of superstition, commoners use euphemisms such as “the city of the dead,” “the pirates of the Styx,” or “the Lake Witches.” Tales to scare youngsters emphasize the lurid: a dark city full of walking corpses ruled by witches, vampires, and necromancers; pirate galleys rowed by the dead and manned by Northland berserkers; a college that teaches black magic; bizarre rites of devil-worship and human sacrifice.

The Church officially discourages mention of Abydos, but this attitude depends on proximity to the city. In and around Quartedec, the threat of Abydos is a reality, so local parish churches lead prayers asking for God’s protection against the “witches of the lake, the walking dead, and the pirates of the Styx” and sermons denounce the evil of necromancy nearly as often as they do adultery. Further away, Abydos is a legend or rumor, one of a long list of evils society guards against, like dragons, demons, werewolves, and the Blackwoods.

The nobility of Quartedec and senior officials in the Church do have a fairly accurate (if biased) idea of what is actually going on in Abydos, and they are in contact with Petrine sympathizers within the city. However, the Church deliberately suppresses discussion of the Lazarite Christian religion (and, by extension, daily life in Abydos) out of fear this heresy could spread. The Curia’s view is that when logistics permit another crusade to be launched, the island can be purged with fire and sword. Until then, Megalos has enough problems without another heresy to worry about. As long as commoners believe Abydos is a nest of devil-worshipping witches, zombies, and blood-thirsty pirates who will surely kill, enslave, or damn all foolish visitors, that’s enough to discourage converts!

Not everyone believes these tales . . . but the few open-minded traders and curious scholars who *do* visit the city tend to avoid mentioning what they find! In Megalos (or other Christian or Muslim lands), admitting to willingly consorting or trading with necromancers and heretics is a quick path to prison or execution.

MEGALOS

Megalos is the nearest great power to Abydos; the Earldom of Quartedec stretches along the southern edge of Lake Styx. Abydos was formerly a fief of Quartedec, and neither its earl nor the emperor have relinquished their claim. The Empire refuses to recognize the existence of Abydos and has no formal diplomatic relations with the city, although informal contacts are maintained through Jewish merchants and local smugglers.

Megalos’ imperial legions have not mounted a full-scale attack on Abydos since the 1700s, largely because the Empire’s bitter struggles against Caithness, Al-Wazif, and recently the Blackwoods have diverted its energy. However, the Earl of Quartedec constantly intrigues with Abydos, funneling money and agents to support rebels within the city. Warships and privateers from both Quartedec and Abydos often commit acts of piracy or raid each other’s territory. The last major sea battle was in 2000; skirmishes are common.

THULIN’S FOLK

The dwarves of the Whitehood Mountains have held a deep enmity for Megalos ever since the Empire tried to seize their mines in 1585. At that time, Abydos sent assistance to the dwarves, and ever after, the city-state and the mountain folk have been friendly if distant allies, aiding one another in their mutual intrigues against Megalos. The dwarves initially distrusted the morals and motives of necromancers of the city, but the inhumanly long life spans of many of Abydos’ rulers parallel the lengthy spans of dwarves . . . and with individuals on both sides willing to take a long view, trust gradually grew between them. Abydos’ trade has also benefited from the boycott Thulin’s folk maintain against Megalos, for as the closest civilized human city to the Whitehood Mountains that is not under the Imperial banner, it is a natural marketplace for dwarf-forged goods.

THE NOMAD LANDS AND RAVENSMARCH

Abydos is a major center for trade with the Nomad Lands. Northlanders exchange meat, furs, gold nuggets, slaves, and amber for civilized goods and luxuries from the City of Abydos and the south. To facilitate this trade, Abydos claims a protectorate over a strip of the Nomad Lands along the north shore of Lake Styx, up to the lower foothills of the Whitehood Mountains. It does not govern this so-called Ravensmarch, but clans there have treaties and friendly relations with the city. Trading vessels from more distant coastal northern clans beyond the Ravensmarch also visit Abydos.

Over the centuries, the Ravens have fought several military campaigns in the Nomad Lands to protect their trading partners against rival clans or tribes, as well as leading punitive expeditions against raiders who have dared to attack Agarthia. Abydos’ power is both feared and respected by its neighbors, although its leaders are (perhaps rightly) considered to be devious sorcerers and witches, rather than honorable warriors.

OTHER NATIONS OF YRTH

Other nations of Yrth are too distant from Abydos to have any significant relations with it. The occasional trader or traveler from Sahud, Caithness, or Zarak visits the city, to bring back tales that are rarely believed at home: a city of necromancy, ruled by heretical priests and female mages, where the dead and the living share the streets . . .

FOREIGN VISITORS

Visitors arrive by merchant ship or small sailboats, usually from any of several fishing villages or small towns dotted along

the northern coast of the Styx. An occasional flying mage or griffin may also stop by, but this would be a very unusual event!

Except in terrible weather (which would also deter any invasion fleet), a couple of Abydos warships patrol off the Bay of Lemures; they will intercept any large vessels bound for Abydos. Ships that do not regularly trade with the city are boarded and searched for Megalan agents or weapons. Aside from times of war, vessels that are well known to the city, or small boats, are allowed through without any boarding, and they sail up river to dock at the city.

The Bay of Lemures that leads to the River Charon has the only suitable landings for actual ships. Plenty of Abydosian fishing boats operate in and around the island. A few moonlight as smugglers and can deliver small parties anywhere along the shore. However, visitors arriving in this fashion will need to be able to pass for natives or legitimate residents (e.g., Northland Guards) to come through the city gates (see Chapter 3).

Northlanders and Dwarves

Northlanders and dwarves trade regularly with Abydos, and they are allowed to enter with few questions asked. Dwarves are always welcomed. A traveler who looks and sounds like a northern barbarian can get in just by applying to join the Northland Guard. Otherwise, a Northlander should either be able to name relatives in the city (easy for a real Northlander, as most will know dozens of extended family members), or be able to do a convincing job of passing as a trader from a more distant part of the Nomad Lands. This requires convincing dress, accent, and a shipload of exotic goods obviously from a faraway place.

Jews

The gate guards recognize most of the regular Jewish merchants by name and sight, but anyone who dresses like a Jew, can speak Ladino, and gives the name of Jewish relatives or contacts in the city can usually get in (the GM makes a reaction roll). If the guards are suspicious, they will detain the traveler and summon a rabbi. If the rabbi vouches for the visitor, he can go in, but the rabbi will be in trouble if the visitor gets into mischief, so few will vouch for a suspicious stranger without good reason. Jewish travelers should carry letters of recommendation from known rabbis or merchants in other cities.

Petrine Christians

Non-Jewish visitors from Megalos, Caithness, or Cardiel are considered enemy heretics. Anyone who fits this description will be arrested at the gate and sold into slavery, unless they are (or disguise themselves as) a member of one of the these groups:

Converts and Pilgrims: Sincere foreign converts to the Lazarite faith who want to visit its places of worship and learning or settle in Abydos are welcome. A priest or master of St. Magdalene's will be summoned to interview them, possibly using Truthsayer spells to be sure.

Diplomats: Accredited heralds or envoys will be received with all due ceremony. Abydos maintains some diplomatic relations with its neighbors, even in time of war. Naturally, they are closely watched by the Ravens and agents of the Church.

Students: If a newcomer looks like a young student and carries a letter of admission from St. Magdalene's, the guards will

give no trouble. If a visitor claims to be a student but doesn't look youthful, or has no documentation, the guards will hold the person and summon a Sister from the college to investigate or use a Truthsayer spell.

Tourists: Travelers arriving from Christian nations who do not appear to be Petrine Christians or Jews (such as Sahudese, elves, and Muslims) are allowed in if they appear to be visiting scholars, entertainers, or merchants (or their bodyguards). Obvious troublemakers (such as armed parties of adventurers) are asked to submit to a Truthsayer spell to determine that they mean no harm to the city or the Church.

A foreigner resident in Abydos can become a citizen by applying to the praetor's office, finding two respected citizens (Status 1+) to vouch for him, and paying a fee of \$200. Until then, foreigners can't join guilds or the Ravens, may not qualify as electors, and pay double tolls at gates. They still pay taxes.

THE DEFENSES

How has a single city of heretics withstood the might of the Imperial legions for centuries? The citizens of Abydos boast of "four shields" that protect them.

The first is Lake Styx itself. Abydos is an island city. To invade, the emperor must not only march to the far north of the Empire, but he must also cross some 60 miles of water. While the Earl of Quaterdec maintains a naval squadron of a dozen warships, transporting the tens of thousands of soldiers needed for an assault requires an immense marshalling of barges, galleys, and sailing vessels. This provides ample warning to the defenders. As Abydos maintains its own squadron of warships, aided by the longships of its Northland allies and subjects, the success of any landing is doubtful. Even then, sustaining an amphibious assault against an organized defender willing to meet the attackers on the beach is among the most difficult of all military operations.

The second shield is the walls of the city. Tall and strong, in good repair, and built with the help of dwarven masons, they are an exceptional obstacle as long as the city's mages can defeat spells aimed at them and the city's defenders can man them.

The third shield is the prowess of the city's magicians. As the home of St. Magdalene's College and of a Church that encourages its clergy to be mages, Abydos boasts more trained wizards than most cities several times its size. Furthermore, they are led by the Ravens, an elite guard of warrior-necromancers. Their magical specialty, necromancy, is further enhanced by the death-aspected mana of the region.

The final shield is the armed forces of Abydos. The city's naval squadron is seasoned from battles with Megalan ships and barbarian raiders; the gentry and militia can field a few hundred good cavalry and a few thousand mediocre spearmen, supplemented by a regiment of tough Northland mercenaries. Given sufficient advance warning, a couple of thousand supplementary Northland warriors and some additional armored gentry can be gathered from among the hamlets and holds north of the Styx along the Ravenmarch, although feudal obligations and logistics will limit these forces to about 40 days of service.

The true strength of the city, however, are the Legion of the Polished Bone and their auxiliaries: 20,000 undead soldiers supported by up to 100,000 zombie militia give Abydos a fearless infantry force that has so far defeated three Imperial legions.

ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

Abydos is largely self-sufficient, with fish from the Styx, crops grown on the island, and imports from the Ravenmarch being adequate to feed the city's populace. The local economy of Agartha is dominated by fishing the lake, agriculture, herding sheep and goats in the hills, and the making of woolen cloth, ships, and pottery. There are also iron and copper mines on the island, but they do not produce enough for export.

The city's merchant galleys sail the Styx, visiting coastal towns and villages along its north and west shores, where they trade with Northlanders from the semi-civilized lands beyond the Emperor's Wall and meet dwarven caravans from the Whitehoods. The city has also become the hub of a small but lively circular trade in woolen cloth, smith crafts, wood, furs, and amber. Its major imports for domestic consumption include spices, wine, salt, timber, and gems, as well as smuggled luxury items from Megalos.

TAXES AND TITHES

Residents pay taxes set from year to year by the senate, one-twentieth their wealth unless there is good reason (e.g., looming invasion) to temporarily raise taxes. All secular Christians (Jews and clergy are both exempt) pay an additional tithe to the Church of a further one-twentieth their wealth. Both taxes and tithes are collected in the first week of October. Other major sources of income are gate tolls and dockyard fees.

COIN OF THE REALM

As a free city, Abydos mints its own coins. The copper farthing (\$1) has a profile of Lazarus (based on an image

painted in the Cathedral of St. Lazarus) on one side, a Greek cross on the other, and the legend "Hand of the Messiah."

The silver shilling (\$4) displays a profile of Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy on one side and a skeletal bird on the other, and the legend "Protector of the True Faith."

Abydos does not mint its own gold coinage, but dwarven gold coins from the Whitehoods and Imperial coinage from Megalos are in reasonably common circulation. Within Abydos, money changers will accept foreign coins without complaint or charge, but demand a 5% cut when changing Abydosian coins into foreign currencies.

Christians in Caithness and Megalos are suspicious of Abydosian coins: a -1 reaction if asked to accept them (-3 for those with a special hatred of heretics). Megalan merchants nickname Abydosian shillings "dead crows." A large sum (over \$1,000) in Abydos coin may open someone in Megalos to the charge of consorting with heretics. Megalan money changers will charge double or more their normal fee when handling such "tainted" currency and after accepting it, will often melt it down (and sometimes report the incident to the authorities).

TECH LEVEL

Abydos is TL3 like most of Ytarria. One TL4 development has taken root in the city: the use of rapier (and cloak) in fencing. According to legend, the rapier was brought to the city in the late 19th century by a young student necromancer from Araterre, who taught the art to fellow members of the Rose Society (p. 25). After much trial and error, local smiths learned to make decent rapiers. Today, rapiers, sabers, and similar fencing weapons are common in the city, especially among female duelists and Ravens.

LAND OF NECROMANCY

Alas that the heretics who inhabit this festering sore are so skilled in the arts of sorcery. Their greatest crimes are the desecration of the dead, which they blasphemously perform in the name of God. Not only do their necromancers animate corpses of warriors, but also those of peasants, servants, and even animals. As these foul undead slaves labor in the fields, their rotting bodies must slowly fall apart, fertilizing the soil with decayed chunks of their own flesh. Eat nothing grown in this evil land!

– Bishop Anselm, *On the Lazarite Heresy* (Megalos, 1897)

Abydos has more trained mages than many cities 10 times its size. The main reasons are the attitude of the Church of Lazarus and the size of its magical university, St. Magdalene's College. Lazarite parish priests are charged with finding children with magical aptitude and encouraging them to either join the Church or receive college training.

Necromancy is practiced by over half the city's mages, and its powers are accepted as completely natural by the populace. Lazarite clergy raise the spirits of the dead to comfort and advise the living. The animation of corpses is regulated by

guilds, with arcane alchemical substances used to prevent corruption. Zombies are used as workers, servants, bodyguards, and, by some, as prostitutes, having the advantage of remembering nothing, demanding nothing, and never speaking unless spoken to.

Abydos also boasts a high number of alchemists. One city street in Abydos, Vat Road, is devoted to their shops.

A LONG-LIVED ARISTOCRACY

If the Godless wilt at the touch of a hand blessed by the true faith, and their strength flows into the pious, is that not God's Will?

– Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy, *Collected Sayings*

In Agartha, the magical gentry and senior clergy tend to live unnaturally extended lives. The clergy justify this by citing the example of the Biblical archbishops such as Methuselah, and state that their long lives are the result of their faith in the teachings of St. Lazarus, as well as devoted scholarship.

In one sense, this is certainly true, for their faith does let them embrace certain necromantic disciplines without qualm. Diligent study of the spell Steal Youth is encouraged for the senior clergy, Ravens, and graduates of St. Magdalene's College, and, as previously stated, slaves have no rights at all.

While many mages are familiar with the Soul Jar spell, only a few use it. Escaping a jar requires a combination of skill and energy that only master mages can muster, and the risk of an enemy capturing the jar also exists.

The Youth spells of the Healing college are studied as a prerequisite to Steal Youth, but the death-aspected mana of the city makes them risky to use safely, so most mages prefer to drain life from a slave. Wealthy gentry who are not mages often use alchemical potions.

While the greatest Agarthan necromancers are functionally immortal, few are older than a century or two, due to a propensity for duels and heavy losses sustained in fighting off the last two Megalan invasions. The mages know that if they don't do their part, they'll be the first burned at the stake if the city falls! Even so, senior clergy and the senate do tend to have the same faces for many decades, so politics are conservative.

A QUIET LAND

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

— Romans 14:9

Visitors to Abydos may be surprised to learn how few people live in the island's countryside; the last census recorded 91,600. Without the undead as farmers, this would be too small a rural population to support a city of Abydos' size. No one knows how many undead exist. The Church estimates their numbers at anywhere from 150,000 to 500,000.

Harvest time resembles a scene from the Apocalypse. Across the island, skeletons move in eerie unison across the fields, long scythes reaping the grain. It's as if the land was filled with thousands of incarnations of Death himself. After the harvest is over, skeletal horses and zombie oxen carry these crops to the living city of Abydos.

Despite the low population, Abydos' economy is quite efficient. Although undead servants may eventually wear out, they serve as an effective and cheap form of plantation labor. With steers often animated after slaughter, farmers have plenty of tireless skeletal oxen at the end of each season. From an industrial point of view, the amount of work available per year using the power of dead cattle alone is



staggering. (Some rural senators have also proposed using zombie cattle in battle, although this concept remains untested.)

Nevertheless, in some ways, Agartha is a dying island. Although the city itself remains vibrant, partly thanks to Northlander immigration, the rural population has declined from about 180,000 in 1600 to its current total. For the last two centuries, Agarthans have been marrying late and having fewer children. Some villages are still lively, but many others are nearly deserted, with many empty, boarded-up houses, quiet streets, and almost no children. The gentry live in manors that seem too large for their shrunken families.

Why is this? Elsewhere in Yrth, more children means more hands to work on the farm and someone to support elderly parents. In Agartha, the Church of Lazarus' promotion of the Zombie spell

means the animated dead of past generations become servants to the living. Some rural jobs still call for a real person: Intelligence is needed to manage a farm and supervise the dead, and many domestic animals can't abide a zombie's presence. But there is far less incentive to have more than a single child, or for mothers to risk their life and health in multiple childbirths, especially since so few Healing spells work well. In some ways, Abydos is experiencing the kind of declining birth rate that is typical of far more advanced industrial societies.

Of course, socioeconomics are not enough to explain the decline. People enjoy both sex and children for their own sake, and while various techniques exist for birth control, accidents also happen. Is there another force at work? Perhaps. Agarthans do not fear the animated dead, but their very presence hangs over the land like a cold blanket. Could this inhibit the natural urge to procreate? Generations of living within the aura of death-aspected mana that covers the island may also contribute. Thomasite scholars who have studied the many aspects of mana have theorized that living in a death-aspected zone may be subtly antithetical to both human and animal reproduction. Agarthans do seem to suffer a larger-than-usual number of stillborn babies.

Whatever the cause, the decrease is less apparent in Abydos itself, where the population has remained fairly stable. The reason for this is that more jobs in the city require skilled labor, so those rural folk whose jobs have been replaced by the dead have tended to migrate toward the city.

Agartha may be doomed to dwindle to a small immortal aristocracy of priests and mages presiding over an island of the dead. However, it could be a long time coming. It has taken 450 years for the city to reach its current state; at the present rate, it would take another three or four centuries before the population halved again, threatening the city's life.

LAW AND JUSTICE

The laws of Abydos are superficially similar to those of most Christian nations. Crimes like treason, murder, rape, kidnapping, assault, theft, fraud, tax evasion, and smuggling goods without paying duties are all against the law and punished by the city. Perjury, blasphemy, and heresy are crimes against God prosecuted by the Church.

MAGIC AND THE LAW

Spells placed on free victims (not slaves) to invade or take control of their mind or body or to steal life force, youth, etc. are treated as a form of either theft, assault, or rape. Magical backfires that injure people or property get a mage charged with murder or assault if a jury doesn't believe the mage took "reasonable precaution."

Except for demon summoning, all necromantic practices, buying and selling corpses, and making zombies are legal; see the *Lich Merchants' Guild* (p. 28) for details. Damaging or stealing a zombie is a crime against its owner's property. There's no law against summoning spirits, as long as they're used for legal purposes.

CARRYING ARMS

It is illegal to "bear arms of war" within the city limits. This includes all shields, most handheld and ranged weapons, and all armor except leather or cloth. Exempt are knives, whips, quarterstaves, and light clubs and batons when disguised as walking sticks or canes. Gentry, Ravens, and the Eumenides Guild have the privilege to carry swords (including rapiers and sabers). People may transport the tools of their trade, but (for example) a band of self-proclaimed "blacksmiths, carpenters, and fishermen" walking about laden with hammers, axes, and nets will attract attention from the Ravens.

It is legal to keep weapons in one's own home, ship, or business, or to convey arms held in a "secure double-locked chest." Thus, armed guards are possible for homes or businesses, and people can carry weapons from the city into the countryside.

The countryside has no restrictions on weaponry, but local gentry will certainly object violently to armed bands trespassing on their land.

Being caught bearing arms results in an arrest and interrogation to see if the people are involved in or planning other crimes. Innocents are freed (unless they resisted arrest), but contraband weapons and armor are taken. Confiscated items are held until a fine of 25% of the item's value is paid.

DUELS

Duels are common in the city. Gentry are expected to defend their honor if challenged or find a stand-in to do so. Killing in a duel is not murder, provided legal forms have been observed. These include a proper invitation written in mammalian blood, 12 hours or more notice, and the delivery of a rose, which may be of paper when fresh flowers are out of season. The rose is red if the duel is to first blood, white to incapacitation, black to the death, or purple if beyond death, in which case the body is animated and continues to fight until

its destruction. Bouquets of roses are not sent as gifts within the city. "To send roses" is slang for any sort of challenge; "an affair of roses" is a duel.

VIOLATIONS OF CANON LAW

Everyone in Agarthia is subject to the canon law of the Church of Lazarus. Rules for secular matters like tithes, marriage, and divorce are similar to those of the Curia, except for esoteric matters like internal Church dogma and organization. What can get foreign visitors into trouble are laws against blasphemy and heresy.

Blasphemy: Anyone insulting, desecrating, or mocking the Church of Lazarus or its symbols is a blasphemer.

Heresy: Practicing or teaching doctrines the Lazarites consider false, such as the Petrine Church's denial of the truth of the Renewed Testament, is considered heresy. Exceptions are noted in law, e.g., Jews have a special exemption to practice their religion in the city.

Diabolism: The only kind of necromancy forbidden by Lazarite law is demon summoning, known as "diabolism." Anyone proven to have deliberately conjured a demon gets thrown in the Silent Maze. A person who can demonstrate that a demon's appearance was an accident can get off, but he may face secular charges. Grimoires containing demon-summoning spells are illegal, while those simply holding the names and descriptions of demons are not.

Idolatry: Non-Judeo-Christian worship, pagan rites, etc. are not permitted without special dispensation.

Civil authorities arrest someone they catch breaking the above laws, but only the Church, through its Hand of Glory inquisition, actively hunts for canon lawbreakers. Violators of canon law are tried by the Hand of Glory in a Church court, which has precedence over civil court except in cases of treason or when dealing with Ravens or members of the senate.

The court may set other punishments based on the circumstances. Possibilities include penance (e.g., make a circuit of the town wall in sackcloth and ashes), fines, whipping, and temporary or permanent excommunication.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In the city of Abydos, the civic law is enforced by the Ravens. In rural Agarthia, the local gentry maintain order on their own lands, but the Ravens may be sent to investigate unsolved crimes or keep the peace between rival landholders.

The Ravens aggressively investigate crimes committed against lives or property of upper commoners and gentry. They ignore organized crime such as protection rackets, prostitution, and stolen-goods fences as long as it isn't too blatant and its victims are lower commoners. Murder and rape or mugging of honest citizens (even lower commoners) are investigated. However, if a poor shopkeeper gets beaten up because he wouldn't pay protection money to a criminal gang, they don't make a big effort unless they find a pattern of such activity that can be linked to organized heretical groups (e.g., Blood of the Martyrs), or they receive numerous complaints. Likewise, if a

murder victim is a criminal or beggar, the case is dropped: Who cares if the scum kill each other off?

Courts consist of a jury of 12 citizens, presided over by an appointed judge. They follow the familiar systems of Roman law, i.e., advocates to speak for both the defendant and state. All witnesses and the accused must submit to Compel Truth spells cast by a licensed Master of St. Magdalene's, or by a Lazarite priest or monk, and deceased spirits may be raised as witnesses. The city has professional lawyers ("advocates"); most of their business involves civil disputes between merchants or landowners.

The Hand of Glory actively investigates rumors of heresy and diabolism. It prosecutes violations of canon law, with no jury and a tribunal of priests or monks as magistrates.

PUNISHMENTS

Lady Ravenjoy believed that making a public spectacle of criminals deterred the guilty and soothed victims' feelings. By tradition, a criminal who is sentenced to death (e.g., for murder) is strangled by the animated corpse or skull-spirit of one of his victims. If that is impossible, due to the victim's body not being found, or being too weak, then the execution is performed by anonymous skeletons from the meat market. The corpses of the

executed are raised as zombies and become property of the state, and they are auctioned off at the meat market.

Other punishments follow medieval practice and are similar to those in Megalos. Criminals guilty of petty crimes receive a public whipping (1d injury) or fine (\$100-600). Serious crimes not warranting death are often punished by excommunication, branding, and enslavement. Gentry may instead be exiled from Agartha for a set period of years. An alternative that is often accepted is for the criminal to repent, take holy orders, and join a monastery.

Thieves are sometimes sentenced to community service: A Flesh to Stone spell is used, and when heavy labor is needed, they are animated using the Animate spell. If they break, too bad . . .

Unlike the Curia, the Lazarites do not burn heretics. The final punishment is the *Silent Maze*, a combination of excommunication, mutilation, and imprisonment. This punishment is also used for rapists, diabolists, and traitors. Their tongues are surgically removed and they are locked within the Silent Maze (pp. 42-43), a labyrinth under the city. Prisoners are not fed, but they can survive for years, eating rats or by cannibalism.

Heretics are always interrogated to determine if they know other heretics, then permitted to recant publicly. Those who do so may get off with a flogging instead of the Silent Maze.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

*After a century or two, I began to ask myself a question:
Why not?*

I had no good answer.

— Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy, *Collected Sayings*

Many of the practices of Abydos seem strange to foreigners. While they share the same language and culture as those of Megalos, centuries of rule by an eccentric necromancer and a heretical Church have led to some differences in customs.

Abydos prides itself on being a center of art and scholarship. It is also home to St. Magdalene's College, an institute of higher learning (see the next chapter).

FINE ARTS

The 17th century under Ravenjoy saw a renaissance in sculpture and painting, as churches were dedicated to the new faith and a new generation of artisans born into the "true Church" toiled to make the city's holy places worthy rivals of those in Megalos.

Lazarus Awakens: The first great work of art glorifying the Lazarite faith, this was painted by master Philopos Glabras on the roof of St. Lazarus' cathedral. The painting shows St. Lazarus casting off his shroud as the Lord Jesus raises him from the dead, while his siblings and the Disciples look on in wonder at the miracle.

A Feast of Ravens: A vivid, powerful, and detailed tapestry that depicts the victorious second coming of Lady Ravenjoy, riding the dragon Moonshadow. It is notable for its aerial depiction of the city as it was in the 18th century, and it is said that its creator, Lady Drusiana, spent many hours levitated

above the city, taking sketches. The 14-meter-long tapestry hangs in the great hall of the Citadel of Birds.

The Seven Cavaliers: Created by the artisan-mage Michael Morgarten, these works are an excellent 19th-century example of Abydosian necromantic craft, inspired by the mechanical toys of the dwarves. The gilded zombie mouse skeletons that serve as tiny mounts for the miniature knights demonstrate fine craftsmanship, especially the detail of the tiny brass horse masks and cloth-of-gold caparisons the mice wear. This work inspired many cheaper copies for the children of the upper commons. Most of the replicas are well crafted, but they use tin soldiers and ordinary cloth, with the undead mice bones painted rather than gilded.

St. Samuel's Tomb: The work of the master sculptor Leonidas the Blind, this is a monumental series of marble sculptures showing the life of the patron Saint of Abydos. It is located in the crypts of the Cathedral of St. Lazarus.

Our Lady of Roses: A small but wonderfully engaging portrait of the famous duelist Sophia Doukaina, painted by Skyros himself, in the modern hemomedian style (that is, in pen and ink mixed with blood). It once hung in the Mason's Guild Hall, before its recent theft. Its present whereabouts are unknown. A reward of \$10,000 is offered for its return.

Child Skating Under Charon Bridge: A recent work by the notorious painter Canidia Nightingale, it is now displayed in the townhouse of Sir Tancred Farthingham. Her powerful evocation of nightmare, as well as her mastery of the form, has made her the darling of the so-called Northgate School of artists, whose shocking work portrays secular themes. Their works are often commissioned by those citizens who wish to be seen as fashionable.

Icons: Religious paintings and sculptures in the Byzantine style are very popular, and most homes display several. Abydos has never suffered anything akin to the iconoclasm movement that troubled the Byzantine empire.

THEATER

Since Lady Ravenjoy reformed the theatrical arts in 1730, all formal plays have been first performed by mimes, and then by prepubescent children masked as adults. Religious parables predominate, supplemented by ironic political satires. However, lately the experimental Gorice Road Theater Company has taken on nontraditional subjects, notably intricately mannered comedies and historical epics, sometimes using a large number of zombies as “extras.” Another recent development has been the Ghost Troupe, primarily composed of students at St. Magdalene’s, who earn book and rent money by performing illusionary shows for the edification and titillation of the lower commons.

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

The folk of Abydos celebrate several days throughout the year with churchgoing, processions, and religious plays. The traditional Christian holidays such as Easter, Lent, Passover, Christmas, and all the usual major saints’ days are observed, but Abydos also has the following unique holidays.

St. Samuel’s Day (February 7): Celebrates the day he found the Renewed Testament. Icons of the saint are carried in a pilgrimage to the cave where it was found.

Lazarus Day (a week before Passover): Celebrated by numerous processions and masses in the Church. Priests visit the meat market and collect some of the recent undead, who then carry candles in solemn procession through the city.

Easter: Celebrated much as in the mainstream church, but three penitents chosen by lot are crucified. Survivors who last till Sunday are taken by the Deathless Monks.

School’s End (June 14): Informally celebrated by a parade of dead schoolmasters from the crypts at St. Magdalene’s, down Kadia’s Way, out the gate, around the walls, and back. Student revels and reckless use of magic follow the parade. Honest folk secure shutters and spend the night in heartfelt prayer.

St. Gilli’s Day (August 10): Dwarves who follow the Lazarite faith feast, drink, bang pots, and sound horns. A float made to look like a dragon is driven through the town, propelled by undead horses, while all church bells in the city are rung.

Ravensday (October 7): The birthday of Lady Ravenjoy is celebrated by gladiatorial combats in the Bloodless Arena; military parades; and the saying of masses for the Lady’s soul. In election years, candidates for the senate and praetor will traditionally announce they are running are on this day; three weeks later, elections are held.

The Day of the Dead (November 2nd): This feast is observed with the Dance of the Dead, where skeletons dance through the streets with the city’s young maidens. There is also a parade of the corpseflayers and lich merchants, with many impressive floats.

STYLITES

The Lazarite faith has its share of hermits who believe in retiring from the world for a life of privation as they contemplate God. However, Agarthia is not a huge island, and on the mainland, a Lazarite hermit has a good chance of martyrdom.

Some hermits have chosen the life of a stylite, as was common in the Byzantine Empire. Rather than a cave in the wilderness or a monastic cell, they seek solitude within the city of Abydos itself. The practice began in Abydos in 1742 when the mystic Makarios the Pious climbed up to the top of the Column of Kalamanos (whose statue had fallen off a century before) and refused to come down. He sustained himself with rain water and donations of food (delivered by a rope and bucket) for 17 years. Several miracles were reported among people who touched the base of his column, and soon the square thronged with pilgrims, many of whom waited for the weekly dump of Makarios’ own waste, which they would carry off or preserve to sell as relics.

Makarios’ act caught the imagination of several generations of monks, and one or two stylites have been dwelling above the city continuously ever since. In 1857, funds were even raised to build a new, blank column for a particularly popular hermit, because all the ruined ones were then in use.

Aside from one period of disfavor in the early 1920s (after a stylite-mage was found to be using levitation to commute off his column at night), the practice has been accepted by the clergy as an important part of the Lazarite tradition.

CHRONOLOGY: YEARS OF THE CITY

There is no evidence that the site of Abydos was inhabited by any pre-human peoples of Yrth. The history of Abydos begins in the 12th century.

1190 – The Banestorm magically transports people from Earth’s Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire) to the island of Agarthia.

1191 – The exiles construct a settlement, which they name Abydos, after the Byzantine town.

1200-1210 – Fishermen from Abydos begin trading with barbarian Nomad Land villages on the north shore of the Styx. These “Northland” clans are of Scandinavian stock, brought to Yrth by the Banestorm a century earlier.

1250 – Abydos is now a thriving market town at the hub of a dozen villages. The excellent harbor and a lucrative trade in furs and amber attracts both merchants and an increasing number of settlers from nearby Quartedec, a northern region of Megalos.

The Historical Abydos

Two places on Earth have been named Abydos. The first is the Egyptian Temple of Abydos, on the west bank of the Nile near Luxor, dating to 3150 B.C.. Here, Osiris (after being dismembered by his rival Set) was brought back to life by his sister Isis, for it was at Abydos that Osiris' head had been buried. After his resurrection, Osiris became the judge of the dead and lord of the netherworld. Thus, Abydos was sacred to the god Osiris and an important location for the Egyptian belief in the afterlife: According to legend, a golden staircase led from Abydos to the next world.

The second historical Abydos was a Greek city on the Aegean coast in western Anatolia (now Turkey). It commanded the narrowest point in the Dardanelles (or

Hellespont), the strait that divided Europe from mainland Asia. In classical Greek times, Xerxes, Persian King of Kings, invaded Europe from Abydos over a pontoon bridge of boats. Alexander the Great returned the favor, in the opposite direction. Later, Abydos became part of the Eastern Roman Empire, and was one of its main tax stations.

Yrth's Abydos was named after the Greek city, but the Egyptian associations of the name with death and resurrection were known to the Lazarite Church's founder, Samuel Hood, thanks to his arcane background as a former Thomasite monk. His decision to journey here to preach the doctrine of Lazarus may well have been motivated by the occult symbolism latent in its name.

1256-1257 – Northland pirates attack Abydos, burning the merchants' quarter. The Lord of Abydos, Michael Kalamanos, leads a retaliatory raid, destroying five pirate villages. A wall is begun around the town to protect against further raids.

1265 – Lord Kalamanos travels to Megalos and swears fealty to the Earl of Quartedec and later the Emperor of Megalos. He is granted Agarthas as his fief, becoming Baron Abydos.

1266 – Megalan clergy visiting Abydos discover the local clergy follow the Greek rather than Latin rites (i.e., what are now Eastern Orthodox rather than Roman Catholic). They attempt to convert the Church of Abydos. Progress is slow and causes resentment against the Megalan Church.

1270-1290 – War breaks out between Megalos and a confederacy of Nomad tribes, including Northland jarls and chieftains. In 1285, Abydos' naval squadron destroys an invasion fleet of 60 Northland longships bound for Quartedec. The war ends in 1290 with the Nomads' defeat. Baron Abydos is awarded the title "Protector of the Styx" and the status of earl.

1300-1500 – After the collapse of the Nomad confederacy, rival Northland jarls begin raiding one another and selling their captives to Abydos slave traders. This slave trade grows over the next two centuries.

1342 – Latin replaces Greek as the official language of the Earl of Abydos' court, although Greek remains a first language for many inhabitants and the local clergy.

1400 – Abydos is awarded a city charter. Its population has swelled to 6,300 souls, of which 1,200 are Northland slaves.

NICASIA RAVENJOY

1499 – A girl named Nicasia Kaleothena is born in Abydos, to a impoverished knightly family.

1516 – Nicasia's magical aptitude is discovered by a traveling wizard, and she is sold to him as an apprentice.

1520 – Eventually running away from her master, Nicasia enlists as a battle mage in a Megalan mercenary company fighting in the great Easter Crusade that Megalos has called against the Moslems.

1523 – As second in command of the notorious Gray Company, Nicasia gains the nickname "Ravenjoy" during bitter fighting in Cardial. Her gender and a growing reputation for questionable magic use prevents her being knighted.

1526 – An unsanctioned magical duel with a master of the Knights Templar compels Nicasia to flee southern Megalos.

1527-1545 – Nicasia is rumored to have served as a caravan guard, a privateer, the shaman of an orcish tribe, a professional duelist, and a student or lover of one of the Djinn.

1540-1545 – The Curia (the ruling body of the Christian Church) receive reports that "icon-worship" still exists within Agarthas. Overreacting to the existence of a few visible remnants of the old Eastern rite, the Curia disciplines 19 native Agarthan clergy and appoints a Megalan cleric as the Bishop of Abydos. Olybrian monks, known for their stern orthodoxy, are dispatched to correct those Abydosians who cling to questionable doctrines.

THE COMING OF THE LAZARITES

1542 – Brother Samuel Hood, a former Thomasite monk, travels to Agarthas. While meditating in the wilderness, he has a dream in which an angel tells him where to visit a cave in the Agarthan Hills. There he allegedly discovers a set of scrolls that contain the Renewed Testament, the "Lost Gospel of Lazarus."

1543-1547 – Brother Hood preaches the Renewed Testament at villages in Agarthas. In many parishes, he discovers Megalan-appointed abbots or bishops out of touch with their local priests and flock. After a while, he begins to speak against Megalos and in favor of the use of icons and the Eastern rites, gaining him many supporters.

1546 – Nicasia Ravenjoy returns to Agarthas to restore the fortunes of her family. Having found wealth as well as power in her travels, she acquires a townhouse in the city and a reputation as a sorceress not to be trifled with.

1548 – The teachings of Samuel Hood come to the attention of the archbishop of Megalos. He declares them "the Lazarite Heresy" and excommunicates Samuel and his followers.

1550 – While preaching in the countryside near the city of Abydos, Samuel Hood and several of his followers are cornered by a band of Knights Templar sent to arrest him. Trapped in a burning barn, Samuel's prayers are answered by a passing stranger, Lady Ravenjoy, who destroys the knights with her magic and blade. She is intrigued by Hood and provides sanctuary to the Lazarites.

THE CIVIL WAR

1551 – Diophrates V, Emperor of Megalos, dies without an heir. A short but violent civil war erupts across the Empire. In the north, the nobles of Abydos take one side and Quartedec the other. However, Abydos picks the wrong claimant, and the Earl of Abydos and his sons die in battle on the mainland.

1552 – A small army from Quartedec besieges Abydos. Plagues within the city kill many leading citizens. Lady Ravenjoy takes command of Abydos' defenses, rallies its soldiers, and uses her necromantic arts to raise up a force of zombies to defend the walls. Faced with a strong defense, the besiegers sail for home.

1553 – Ravenjoy consolidates her grip on Abydos and deals with riots and uprisings. Citizens who object to a woman or a necromancer as their liege lord are purged, as are those clerics who oppose her toleration of the Lazarites. She sends envoys to the dwarves of the Whitehood Mountains, the Earl of Quartedec, and the Northlanders offering treaties of friendship. The Earl of Quartedec spurns these overtures.



1554 – Exiles from Lady Ravenjoy's regime arrive in Quartedec. These dispossessed nobles and merchants spread tales of necromancy and heresy, and they begin agitating for an expedition against Abydos. Ravenjoy offers 2,000 able-bodied Northland slaves their freedom if they take up arms to defend the city. They form the Northland Guard.

1555 – The Earl of Quartedec lands a small army to retake the city. In a hard-fought battle, the Megalans are defeated. Ravenjoy and Samuel Hood animate the many dead, creating the nucleus of the "the Legion of the Polished Bone." Word of the defeat reaches the emperor. Imperial plans to send a full Legion to reinforce Quartedec and retake Abydos are deferred when Al-Wazif invades Megalos.

1556 – Ravenjoy begins redistribution of the lands confiscated from her opponents, favoring her supporters. A new class of Abydos nobility and clergy, bound to her, is formed.

FAITH AND ALLIANCES

1557 – Lady Ravenjoy frees all Northland slaves in Agartha in recognition of their support for her cause.

1559 – Ravenjoy is excommunicated by the Curia. In Abydos, a conspiracy led by the remaining "Petrine" (Megalan Christian) bishops succeeds in murdering Samuel Hood but fails to ignite a popular revolt. Ravenjoy executes those responsible and expels all remaining non-Lazarite clergy. Samuel Hood is acclaimed as a martyr.

1560 – Ravenjoy appoints Samuel's disciple Makarios the Conciliator as the new "Archbishop of Abydos." The Curia places all of Abydos under an interdict.

1562 – Makarios forms the Hand of Glory, a body charged with suppressing Petrine sympathizers and heretics.

1567 – Construction of the great Cathedral of St. Lazarus begins.

1587 – Megalos invades the Whitehood Mountains to capture the dwarven mines. Lady Ravenjoy ships a regiment of skeleton infantry to support King Thulin's dwarves. The Imperials are driven back. With Thulin's permission, Ravenjoy enlists many Imperial dead in her forces, which sail home stronger than before.

1590-1620 – A delegation of Thulin's folk arrive at Abydos and begin reinforcing the defenses of the city, working with local mages. Over the next 30 years, dwarf-engineered towers, walls, and vaults go up, housing the Legion of the Polished Bone and many siege engines. The Lady also works on her underground prison, the Silent Maze.

AGAINST THE EMPIRE

1589 – An Olybrian monk, John of Kethalos, preaches a crusade against "the Lazarite heresy." Ravenjoy sends a diplomatic mission and much gold to the Nomads to stir up trouble.

1590 – As the crusade gathers support from the emperor, Hospitallers, and Templars, a barbarian invasion sweeps down from the Nomad Territories to take the Imperial castle of Heolford and drive the Megalans south of the Whitehoods. The crusade is called off as Megalos diverts its armies to deal with this Nomad invasion.

1595 – Ravenjoy founds Saint Magdalene's College to train young women in the arts of necromancy and theology.

1622 – The Lazarite Order of the Holy Blood (the Deathless Monks) are founded.

1627 – The Ravens, Lady Ravenjoy's all female guard, are formed.

1640 – The Curia and Quartedec nobles finally organize their crusade against Abydos. Difficulties are encountered with lake transport and raiding Abydosian war galleys. Only one Imperial legion manages to land on Agartha. The Imperials are defeated in a bloody battle outside the city walls, their spells neutralized by Lazarite priests and nuns, and their infantry slaughtered by dwarf-built artillery and the remorseless zombies of the Polished Bone.

1653 – The City of Abydos celebrates 100 years of Lady Ravenjoy's rule with an impressive festival.

1677 – Lady Ravenjoy orders the creation of the first unwilling flesh scrolls (see *Flesh Library*, pp. 26-27) at St. Magdalene's.

1700 – Abydosian nobles begin a slow process of establishing holdings on the northern reaches of the Styx.

1728 – A party of Megalan adventurers infiltrate the Citadel of Birds to slay the evil necromancer Ravenjoy and loot the rumored treasures she is said to possess. She is injured but lives; the survivors of the attempted theft are cast into the Silent Maze.

- 1730** – After a satirical play impugns her honor, Lady Ravenjoy has 21 members of the Players' Guild confined to the Silent Maze ("the silence of the players").
- 1742** – The Stylite movement begins in Abydos.
- 1750** – The Church of Lazarus canonizes Samuel Hood. Gilli Oakenbeard is martyred.

END OF AN ERA

- 1751** – Ravenjoy receives an ambassador from Thulin's Folk, who ask her help with a great dragon. The Lady appoints the city praetor as regent, assisted by the head of her Raven guard, and vanishes on a journey to the Whitehood mountains.
- 1752** – The emperor agrees to the Church's call for another crusade against the "northern heretics." A massive building program strengthens the Imperial fleet at Quartedec.
- 1753** – The Imperial fleet defeats Abydos' navy and lands two elite legions. The forces of Abydos retire within the walls, and the city is besieged. The month-long siege is broken by the sudden arrival of Lady Ravenjoy, who returns riding the zombie dragon Moonshadow. As night comes, the Polished Bone and Deathless Monks are released, and the Imperial forces waver, then break. A cohort of the True Dragon legion and a contingent of elite Hospitallers and Templars cover the emperor's retreat to the ships, but the master of the Templars falls to Ravenjoy's blade. Afterward, the damage to Abydos is repaired by the animated corpses of Megalan soldiery, who join the Legion of the Polished Bone.
- 1755** – A band of 27 vengeful Templar mages infiltrate Agartha and ambush Ravenjoy as she visits her old manor in the Agarthan backcountry. They overwhelm Ravenjoy's personal guards and use a Drain Mana spell to negate her powers and disable Moonshadow. Ravenjoy dies fighting, her spirit prevented by the mana-dead zone from fleeing into her Soul Jar. The three surviving Templars douse her body with flaming oil and hold off reinforcements until Ravenjoy's body is burned to ashes.
- 1757** – Following instructions left by Ravenjoy, the tribune Destasia Laskarina becomes the first Lady Raven. Kadia Andronikos is the first city praetor to rule independently. All Agartha mourns Lady Ravenjoy. Gladiatorial games are held in which the corpses of the Templars duel one another. Ravenjoy's ashes are scattered from the Citadel of Birds.

AFTER THE LADY

- 1758-1850** – The tumultuous events in Megalos that lead to the birth of the principality of Cardiel and the founding of Caithness divert Imperial attention from Abydos for nearly a century, giving its institutions time to recover from Ravenjoy's death.
- 1797-1799** – When a wild highland horde menaces Abydos' Nomad Lands trading partners, Praetor Nichomachi sends Lady Raven Laskarina and 1,200 undead troops of the Polished Bone to their assistance. The Battle of Nordheim Bridge sees the defeat of the barbarians. The term "Ravensmarch" comes to describe Nomad Lands north of the Styx.
- 1816** – First reported sighting of the demon Glittertooth.
- 1820** – Lady Raven Laskarina retires. She is replaced by tribune Eudocia Kabasilas, establishing an orderly succession that has continued to the present day.

- 1851** – In Abydos, Lazarite bishop Leo the Apostate opens secret negotiations with liberal elements within the Curia to discuss ways of reuniting the Church of Lazarus with the Petrines. The Hand of Glory discover his treachery. He is sent to the Silent Maze.
- 1872** – Student-mage Wayan de Eryth, an exile from Araterre, enters St. Magdalene's college. To pay for books and tuition, de Eryth teaches Aralaise-style fencing to fellow members of the Rose Society.
- 1915** – Narses the Pious becomes Archbishop of Abydos.
- 1926** – Raven Tribune Gabrielle Tzirithon is killed in a fight with Naglfari mages, but later returns from the dead to resume her position, earning the nickname Boneshanks.
- 1948** – Gabrielle Boneshanks is chosen as Lady Raven.
- 1982** – A costly war breaks out between Megalos and Caithness, drawing forces away from the north. Abydosian privateers take advantage of the weakening of Megalan defenses to increase raids on Quartedec. Captain Basil Stephanos and his ship *Hell Shark* distinguish themselves.

RECENT EVENTS

- 1988** – Basil Stephanos enters the senate of Abydos.
- 1993** – A secret Petrine church is discovered by the Hand of Glory. Many arrests are made, but the price is radicalization of the Petrine movement.
- 1994** – The Hand of Glory begins a new purge of Petrine worshippers within the city. In reaction, a Petrine resistance group, Blood of the Martyrs, is founded.
- 1995** – Blood of the Martyrs begins a terrorist campaign in which 17 priests and several senior Ravens are killed. The movement's headquarters is discovered and destroyed by the Ravens, but many senior members escape and reform the movement.
- 1999** – Abydosian privateers capture and loot a ship carrying the intended beautiful young bride of the Earl of Quartedec. Due to a mix-up, instead of being ransomed, she is sold to St. Magdalene's College as a flesh scroll.
- 2000** – The enraged Earl of Quartedec attacks Abydos. His squadron is defeated by Lady Raven Gabrielle in a brisk naval engagement. To discourage further escalation, the Lady Raven then lands the Legion of the Polished Bone to burn the naval dockyards at Quartedec, but it is ordered not to assault the city to avoid starting a full-scale war.
- 2005** – Blood of the Martyrs starts a new campaign of murder and terrorism, targeting not only Ravens and priests but also merchants and businesses. An election to select new officers for the Alchemist's Guild is a farce of violence and intimidation.
- 2006** – Repairs to Quartedec's dockyards are completed, and the earl begins rebuilding his fleet.
- 2007** – Naglfari "Jarl of Jarls" Einar Ingolfsson is assassinated by an unknown killer. A violent struggle begins between rival jarls for control of the Abydos underworld. The leader of Blood of the Martyrs, Luke Hook, is captured by the Ravens and sent to the Silent Maze. He is succeeded by his brother Edward.
- 2008** – Basil Stephanos is elected praetor. A naval skirmish between Abydos warships and Quartedec privateers raises tensions in Lake Styx.

CHAPTER TWO

ORGANIZATIONS

Many gentlewomen of this wicked city carry swords, like the woman knights in Caithness, but prefer to fight using rapiers and cloaks, having adopted the style of the fencers of Araterre. Some

are also evil witches: These dress as carrion birds and patrol the streets; fear of them makes the heretics obey their rulers.

*– Bishop Anselm, **On the Lazarite Heresy** (Megalos, 1897)*

DEFENDERS OF THE CITY

The permanently embodied protectors of Abydos are the Ravens, the Legion of the Polished Bone, and the Northland Guard.

THE RAVENS

Law and order in Abydos are enforced by the Ravens, who were originally Lady Ravenjoy's personal guard. Skilled necromancers, the Ravens wear feathered cloaks and bird-mask leather helms. All are women, often the younger daughters of gentry. Northlanders nickname the Ravens "valkyries," after the spectral warrior women who haunted Norse battlefields to choose which of the slain would be raised to serve Odin and fight on for all eternity.

The commander of the Ravens is the Lady Raven. Under her are four senior tribunes, 20 junior tribunes, 80 guard captains, and 400 Raven Guards. The Raven's headquarters is the Citadel of Birds, which is the residence of their commander, the Lady Raven. The other Ravens live in private dwellings. Half the Ravens are based in Abydos; the remainder have posts in country villages.

Recruitment and Duties

To join as a Raven Guard, a woman applies to the Lady Raven's office, usually speaking with a tribune. She must be a citizen of Agarthia or have the Lady Raven's permission, be 16 or older, in good health, and both a mage and a skilled swordswoman. Promotion is through merit, but only a limited number of slots are available for tribunes and higher ranks. These require Magery 2 and (at minimum) the ability to cast the Control Zombie, Summon Spirit, and Zombie spells.

The Lady Raven serves until she wishes to retire, when she appoints her own successor. The Lady Raven is forbidden to appoint a relative (by blood or adoption) to the post. If the Lady Raven dies without appointing a successor, the Ravens elect one.

Each Raven Guard or captain is assigned to the office of a tribune. She's expected to report every morning or evening, depending on whether she is on daywatch or nightwatch (shifts alternate weekly). There, she receives her duties for the day.

Raven Guards usually work in pairs, or sometimes in a squad under a guard captain. They are a combination of detective and constable. They patrol the streets, investigate crimes, act as bodyguards for dignitaries, protect important places, and go beyond the city on special missions as commanded by their superiors.

Guard captains (Military Rank 3) command posts such as city gates, or they work on sensitive missions, either solo, in pairs or in command of three to five Ravens. They may also act as mages and officers on warships.

Junior tribunes (Military Rank 4) run criminal investigations, command warships, and assist at trials using their magic to compel truth or summon spirits. Senior tribunes (also Rank 4) assist the Lady Raven in administering the Ravens.

The Lady Raven (Military Rank 5) sets policy and objectives, and she reports regularly to the praetor and senate. In wartime, the Lady Raven commands the Legion of the Polished Bone, and the Ravens serve as its sergeants and officers.

Raven Guard

The typical Raven Guard has several years experience. She is in her late 20s or early 30s. She usually has a degree in magic from St. Magdalene's College. On city patrol, an ordinary Raven Guard wears a leather helm, jacket, gloves, and boots, and a light cloak. She travels armed with a sword (of her choice), large knife, and a 1-6-point Powerstone. In battle, she is issued a skeleton horse and wears mail or plate armor and a bird-crested great helm.

ST 10; DX 12; IQ 12; HT 12.

Damage 1d-2/1d+1; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12; Will 12; Per 12; FP 14. Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 10; Parry 11; Block 10. 6'; 160-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes; Duty (Ravens; 9 or less); Legal Enforcement Powers; Magery 1; Military Rank 2; Sense of Duty (Comrades); Status 1.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Abydos)-13; Brawling-12; Broad-sword-14 or Rapier-14; Cloak-12; Criminology/TL3-11; First Aid-12; Law (Abydos)-10; Occultism-11; Riding (Horse)-12; Seamanship/TL3-12; Soldier/TL3-12; Streetwise-12; Swimming-12.

Spells: Alarm-12; Armor-12; Aura-12; Clumsiness-12; Daze-13; Death Vision-13; Detect Magic-12; Fascinate-12; Fear-12; Find Direction-12; Foolishness-12; Light-12; Itch-12; Measurement-12; Sense Danger-12; Sense Foes-12; Sense Emotion-12; Sense Spirit-12; Shield-12; Simple Illusion-12; Spasm-12; Tanglefoot-12; Tell Time-12; Terror-12; Truthsayer-12; Ward-12; Watchdog-12.

THE LEGION OF THE POLISHED BONE

The Legion of the Polished Bone is an army of undead warriors kept in catacombs until called upon by the Lady Raven. They were created from the dead of many battlefields, and they have been added to over the centuries by the Ravens and priests.

The Legion are ordered to obey the commands of the Lady Raven and her officers. Under their command, the Polished Bone is as disciplined as any Imperial contingent. It numbers 6,000 warriors, mostly skeleton infantry, but with 500 cavalry (on undead horses). They are equipped after the fashion of the Megalan legions whose troops they once were. The styles of their arms span nearly 500 years, but they are kept in fair repair.

In wartime, they are organized into battalions of 1,200 (under tribunes), companies of 250 (under junior tribunes), platoons of 50 (under captains), and squads of 10 (under Raven Guards). In peacetime, only a fifth of the legion are deployed – guarding walls and serving on ships – and Ravens command one echelon lower, e.g., Raven Guards command no soldiers, while captains take charge of a squad.

The Legion does not grow tired or feel fear, and their remorseless advance has filled many an invading host with dread. They are vulnerable to area-effect Turn Zombie or Drain Mana spells, but then again, human troops are vulnerable to area-effect spells such as Terror or Mass Sleep that zombies ignore.

Skeleton Guard

A typical undead legionary, this guard is usually a former Megalan equipped in the style of the 16th- or 17th-century legions, or a reanimated Northland Guard. Two-thirds of the guards are heavy infantry spearmen; a third are bowmen. Spearmen wear a mail shirt and pot helm and are armed with a shortsword, long spear, and medium shield. Archers have a mail shirt, pot helm, regular bow with quiver of 20 arrows, and a shortsword. Reserves from the crypts sometimes have rusty (cheap quality) weapons, but troops manning the walls have gear that is in good repair. Some skeleton guards row galleys.

ST 10; **DX** 13; **IQ** 8; **HT** 10.

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10; Will 8; Per 8; FP 10.

Basic Speed 6.75; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10; Block 10. SM 0; height 5-6'; weight 70-150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Skeleton.

Skills (Archer): Bow-13; Brawling-12; Shortsword-12.

Skills (Spearman): Brawling-14; Shield-14; Shortsword-13; Spear-14.

THE NORTHLAND GUARD

Abydos is also defended by a 1,200-strong force of barbarian mercenaries. Originally formed from freed slaves, the Guard is now composed of adventurers, exiles, and professional soldiers drawn from the Nomad Territories. Many Nomad Lands clans support Abydos in its recruitment, as the Guard is a safety valve for landless younger sons who might otherwise start feuds at home.

The Guard is organized into bands of 50-200 men commanded by captains (Rank 2) and squads of 10-16 commanded by sergeants (Rank 1). Half serve on naval warships in the Styx, while the rest are barracked in Abydos to patrol the streets, man gates and towers, and fight as infantry if needed. They must obey the orders of Ravens of higher Rank; mixed Guard/Raven patrols are common, usually with a Raven or two leading a squad of Northland Guardsmen.

The Northland Guard has a professional rivalry with the Ravens, tinged with both respect and a certain superstitious awe of those “valkyrie-witches.”

Guardsmen are known for getting into drunken brawls off duty, but the courts are lenient with them, as long as they or their captains pay for damages.

Northland Guardsman

Guardsmen wear a mail hauberk and pot helm. Those on land have a long spear, axe, and medium shield. Those serving on the ships wield an axe and medium shield, and they may forego body armor during some operations. Officers sometimes have broadswords instead of shields; everyone carries a knife.

ST 12; **DX** 12; **IQ** 10; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 24 lbs.; HP 12; Will 11; Per 10; FP 11. Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 9; Parry 11; Block 11. 6'; 160-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes; Duty (To the Guard and Ravens; 9 or less); Military Rank 0-3; Social Stigma (Minority Group)

Skills: Axe/Mace-14; Brawling-13; Carousing-12; Hiking-11; Shield-14; Soldier/TL3-10; Spear-14. • Naval guardsmen replace Hiking and Spear with Seamanship/TL3-11 and Swimming-11.

Abydos has four “shields” to protect it: water, walls, wizardry, and warriors.

Privateers and Gentlemen

In addition to Abydos' official military, the city has a tradition of privateering. Wealthy gentry and merchants fit out galleys or longships for piratical raids against both Megalos and unaffiliated Northern lands.

Pirate crews include gentry, local adventurers, Northlanders, and Eumenides Guild members. There are often a few mages aboard, such as retired Ravens, militant priests seeking to strike out against the Petrine heretics, or college students eager for adventure. Like the warships of the Polished Bone, the ships are powered by zombie oarsmen, who also fight during boarding actions.

The Styx can't support too many pirates, but a few vessels are active in any given year, striking against both coastal villages or towns and foreign shipping. Occasionally pirate ships join with warships from the Legion under Raven command, for major operations such as Gabrielle Boneshank's famous raid on the Quartedec docks.

In addition to ordinary plunder, pirates take captives. Some are used for exotic purposes (flesh scrolls, or the victims of Steal Youth spells). Others are sold to Northland slave markets or ransomed through middlemen such as Jewish or Northlander merchants. Intact bodies are revived as zombies or brought back, for sale to the meat market.

untrained peasants, but fearless, tireless, and obedient.

Skeleton Knight

Former members of either the Abydos gentry or a Megalan knight, many skeleton knights ride skeleton horses. The majority of knights are in antique armor rather than modern full plate. They wear a mail hauberk, mail coif, mail sleeves and leggings, and a barrel helm. They wield a lance (or long spear, if on foot), a thrusting broadsword, and a medium shield.

ST 11; DX 14; IQ 9; HT 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 9; Per 9; FP 11.

Basic Speed 7.25; Basic Move 7; Dodge 10; Parry 11; Block 10.

SM 0; 5-6'; 70-150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Skeleton.

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-16; Lance-15; Riding (Horse)-13; Shield-15; Spear-15.

Skeleton Horse

Abydos is not a good-horse breeding region, but centuries-old undead horses are often ridden by both skeleton knights and the living, and live mounts are animated after they succumb to old age or (usually) disease.

ST 23; DX 10; IQ 1; HT 12.

Will 9; Per 10; Speed 6.25; Dodge 9; Move 8.

SM +1 (3 hexes); 850-1,200 lbs.

Traits: Enhanced Move 1 (Ground Speed 16); Hooves; Peripheral Vision; Quadruped; Skeleton; Weak Bite.

Skills: Brawling-13; Mount-14.

Cost: \$2,500.

KNIGHTS AND MILITIA

The country gentry train as knights, and most have a small retinue of men-at-arms (both living and dead). If necessary, the praetor can summon them to arms. The host would take a week to organize, and it could be maintained for no more than two months of the year. Abydos' levy would consist of 100-150 knights (country gentry) with 300-400 spearmen and light cavalry (their retainers) – and 10 times that many undead knights and retainers, although many will have old and rusty (cheap quality) weapons. In the most dire crisis, a general levy of undead may be summoned from rural farms: a horde of up to 100,000 spear- or scythe-armed zombies –

HOLY ORDERS

The Church of Lazarus includes several organizations, from the mundane to the frightening.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Priests of Lazarus are much like mainstream Christian priests, except for their unusual beliefs. They range from ordinary parish priests to administrators. The highest ranks are the Archbishop of Abydos and five bishops – one for Gebura Town (the port section of Abydos) and one for each county. Priests need to have Magery 2+ if they wish to advance in the Church.

Lazarite Priest

This is a typical Lazarite priest, probably in his late 20s or early 30s. A likely graduate of St. Magdalene's, he has had a few posts in his career, serving as an assistant a senior cleric and as a parish priest. His magical skills are focused on summoning spirits and raising and controlling the undead. He continues his necromantic studies as he rises in the priesthood. For an

example of what the highest ranks of the clergy are like, see *Archbishop Narses the Pious* (pp. 46-47).

ST 10; DX 10; IQ 12; HT 12.

Damage 1d-2/1d+1; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12; Will 11; Per 10; FP 14.

Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 11.

5-6'; 120-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clerical Investment; Duty (Lazarite Church; 9 or less); Magery 2; Religious Rank 1; Sense of Duty (Comrades); Status 1.

Skills: Administration-12; Law (Church)-11; Occultism-11; Public Speaking-13; Religious Ritual (Lazarite)-13; Singing-12; Staff-12; Teaching-11; Theology-13.

Spells: Animate-11; Aura-12; Control Zombie-13; Death Vision-13; Detect Magic-12; Lend Energy-12; Lend Vitality-12; Light-12; Minor Healing-12; Sense Emotion-12; Sense Foes-12; Sense Spirit-12; Skull-Spirit-12; Steal Energy-12; Steal Vitality-12; Summon Spirit-13; Turn Zombie-13; Zombie-15.

THE HAND OF GLORY

The Hand of Glory is an office of the Church of Lazarus charged with finding and trying heretics and diabolists. It also serves as the Church of Lazarus' spy network, gathering information of a political as well as religious nature. Its Grand Inquisitor submits regular reports to the archbishop's office. He may or may not choose to share them with the praetor, senate, or Ravens.

Members of the office are known as Inquisitors, headed by a Grand Inquisitor, appointed by the archbishop. They are recruited from the priesthood and the monastic orders, chosen for faith and magical ability. The office is nicknamed "the inescapable hand": If a living prisoner resists interrogation, they will often execute him, then use Summon Spirit to question his corpse.

There are 70 inquisitors, assisted by an undisclosed number of secret informers and spies. They usually call upon the Ravens when the time comes to make an actual arrest. The Hand's reach extends into nearby lands like Quartedec and the Ravensmarch; some of their agents may not be aware who they actually work for!

Inquisitors vary widely in skills and abilities; typically, start with a Lazarite priest, add Legal Enforcement Powers, skills like Interrogation, and spells like Compel Truth, Invisible Wizard Ear, Mind-Search, Pain, and Summon Spirit. Others have more unusual abilities. For an example of a senior inquisitor, see *Brother Demetrios the Icon Painter* (pp. 50-51).

THE ORDER OF THE HOLY BLOOD

This is the creed of the Order of the Holy Blood, sometimes known as the Deathless Monks:

"I will no longer eat flesh nor fruit.

"I will abstain from the pleasures of the flesh.

"I will forgo the light of the sun.

"As the Lord suffered the passion of the Holy Cross, let me suffer at its touch, so by my mortification I become closer to Him. I swear never to harm the Cross, nor those who bear it.

"My end shall come only when a shaft of sacred wood, like unto the Spear of Gaius Cassius, pierces my side, or if I break these holy vows.

*"I devote my eternity to the service of the Lord.
Amen."*

Their founder was the priest Nikodorus, whose faith never wavered even when he awoke in his coffin, and whose own will (so it is said) enabled him to survive the blandishments of the vampire temptress that made him what he was. After much prayer, he realized the curse was God's will, and he could better serve the Lord in death than life. The archbishop was persuaded, and the Order of the Holy Blood, or Deathless Monks, was founded.

Today, folk transformed into vampires against their will are encouraged by the Church of Lazarus to take holy vows and join the order. A very small number of people are also transformed directly into vampires by the order.

The order currently has 20 brothers, living in the Monastery of the Holy Blood just outside Abydos. A few nuns are also vampires, but they dwell in crypts under St. Magdalene's Convent.

The Deathless Monks devote their time to prayer or scholarship, and those who are mages study necromancy. They prefer to drink the blood of sinners, believing it is purified by passage through their holy bodies. Some of the monks (especially the younger ones) seek out criminals and sinners in need of purification, or hunt demons and "evil" vampires. Monks can join the Hand of Glory if they have the skills and inclination.

Lazarite priests sometimes send those who confess to lustful thoughts to the brothers as a penance, that the Deathless Monks may cool their ardor by draining the hot blood of lust from their veins. As a penitent struggles in the icy embrace of a monk, feeling cold fangs sink into his neck, the young sinner usually swears to abstain from the pleasures of mortal flesh forever.

People suffering from disease also see the monks. It's believed that by having blood drained, evil humours may be let out.

The template for Yrth vampires is found in **GURPS Banestorm** (p. 201), or GMs may use the vampire template on p. B262. For an example of a Deathless Monk, see *Brother Demetrios the Icon Painter* (pp. 50-51). At a minimum, a Deathless Monk has these traits:

Advantages: Patron (Order of the Holy Blood; 6 or less) [8]; Vampire [100].

Disadvantages: Vows of Poverty [-5]; Vow of Obedience [-5].

Skills: Many, as most are 100 years old or more.

THE POOR BROTHERS OF ST. JUDAS ISCARIOT

A story in the Renewed Testament claims that Judas Iscariot repented of his sins. He was forgiven by Lazarus, rather than dying in disgrace as is usually believed.

The Poor Brothers of St. Judas Iscariot was likewise founded to redeem the irredeemable. The Brothers take it upon themselves to do missionary work to reform criminals and street urchins. They take a "tough love" approach, but they also operate soup kitchens, teach reading, and train others in skills such as carpentry. The order's woodworking also provides them with extra funds.

Few Poor Brothers are mages, but most know how to use a stout cudgel. Their abbey is found in Abydos, with smaller monasteries outside some rural villages. They offer sanctuary for male criminals, except heretics, provided the criminal shows repentance and joins their order.

Poor Brother of St. Judas

ST 12; **DX** 11; **IQ** 11; **HT** 12.

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12; Will 13; Per 11; FP 12. Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 11. 5-6'; 120-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Duty (Lazarite Church; 9 or less); Patron (Poor Brothers of St. Judas; 9 or less); Reputation +1 (Tough but fair; among citizens of Abydos); Sense of Duty (to the Poor); Status 1; Vows (Chastity, Obedience to their Order, Poverty).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Neighborhood)-13; Carpentry-12; Detect Lies-11; Diplomacy-10; Fast-Talk-11; Public Speaking-12; Religious Ritual (Lazarite)-10; Scrounging-11; Singing-12; Staff-12; Streetwise-13; Teaching-11; Theology-9; Urban Survival-12.

THE SISTERS OF MAGDALENE

This was originally a small charitable order that did missionary work among poor women and prostitutes. However, the Lazarite gospels cast Mary Magdalene as a teacher and mage. At the urging of Lady Ravenjoy, the order altered its focus. The arts of scholarship and magic encouraged, and many younger daughters of the gentry were inducted.

Today, the mundane Sisters operate a number of parish schools for children, while their mages and scholars run the College of St. Magdalene's and perform much scientific and

magical research. Like the Alycite Nuns of Caithness, they are famous for their magical powers, but they specialize in necromancy.

Magery is not required to join, but about one in six Sisters is a mage. Skills vary widely; for an experienced mage, use Lazarite Priest statistics (p. 22) but remove Clerical Investment, Administration, Law, and Public Speaking, and add Research-12, Teaching-14, and Thaumatology-12. Senior Magdalenes may be centuries old thanks to necromantic magic; for an example, see *Doctor Sabelia, the Head Librarian* (pp. 51-52).

ST. MAGDALENE'S COLLEGE

Originally a convent school intended to provide what Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy felt was a "proper" education for the young Sisters, St. Magdalene's gradually developed a more secular character and accepted male masters and students.

Today, St. Magdalene's College is essentially a guild of masters of the arts. The college establishes a curriculum of study, holds final examinations, and licenses degrees. Instruction is provided by individual masters in exchange for a fee paid directly to them.

At present, the university is open to all who meet its master's criteria. The college is infamous among those mages who know of its existence for teaching necromancy and for its Flesh Library.

ADMISSION

Applicants visit the Chancellor's Office at St. Magdalene's Convent. Students must be 15 or older, literate, and have at least Accented comprehension of English and at least Broken comprehension of Latin. There is an application fee of \$100. A "Good" or better reaction is required to get in. Students may add twice their Magery level and their Status (or instead, a Patron's Status if he provides a letter of recommendation) to the reaction roll. Foreign students may be accepted; the usual procedure is to send a letter of application (typically delivered through Jewish merchants) first.

The Church of Lazarus will pay the tuition of any mage who agrees to become a priest or nun after graduation and studies both Theology and Magic. Some guilds offer tuition scholarships to member's children, with conditions relating to their study, e.g., the Armorers' Guild would expect a student to learn Making and Breaking and weapon/armor Enchantment spells. Disregarding such agreed conditions can lead to charges of fraud or perjury.

CURRICULUM AND DEGREES

The college assumes competency in the basics of Latin grammar and arithmetic. It offers degree programs in Magic, Thaumatology, Theology, Law, Medicine, and Philosophy. (Philosophy includes history, mathematics, astronomy, and literature.) Combination degrees are common, e.g., Magic and Theology.

To secure a bachelor's degree in a field, a student must study for three years. Two more years are required for a

master's degree with a further two to six years for a doctorate. Very few students reach the uppermost level, most dropping out after a Bachelor's degree to enter the Church, government, or private practice.

The college chancellor may choose to recognize a foreign degree (or equivalent education), allowing its owner to study for a higher degree, or teach if they have a master's or doctorate. Degrees from Megalos and Cardiel are normally accepted, but others may be asked to demonstrate proof of their expertise.

Study involves attending lectures run by masters, close reading of selected texts, and, for Magic students, experiments. The skill a student ends up with depends on the hours he or she studies (see *Improvement Through Study*, p. B292).

After admission, a student must make arrangements with an individual master to attend lectures. This requires a personal interview (GMs may require a reaction roll as above). The typical fee is \$3 per hour of study, often paid in advance for a month. Students are also expected to willingly assist their master in his own projects (e.g., enchanting or research).

Lectures are held in each master's own home, or if they have many students, in halls rented for the occasion. Lectures begin the last day of October and end in June.

Most students study with more than one master to attain a broader education. However, feuds between masters are not unknown, and one may refuse to teach students studying with a rival.

College regulations forbid masters from teaching Very Hard spells to students who have not attained a bachelor's degree, but bribing masters and illicit copying do occur! Teaching Summon Demon is officially forbidden.

The college chancellor awards all degrees, and a board composed of at least three masters in that field examines students to ensure they deserve the honor. For example, to meet the requirements for a Magic degree, students should have devoted half their study hours to learning spells (an even split between Necromantic spells and other colleges is common), and a quarter of their time to picking up academic skills like History, Research, Philosophy, Thaumatology, and Writing. Most students spend the remaining quarter of their time on extracurricular interests, acquiring skills like Brawling, Carousing, Cloak, Fast-Talk, Rapier, Savoir-Faire (High Society), Sex Appeal, and Singing.

Other degrees follow the same pattern, replacing spell learning with their specialty, e.g., a Theology student might devote half his time to studying Law (Canon Law) and Theology.

THE FACULTY

Chancellor Patricia Tagarina administers the college. A former Abbess of St. Magdalene's, the chancellor is 94 years old (but looks 40) and a decent necromancer who also specializes in Water and Darkness magic. A senior St. Magdalene's nun, her family was gentry, and she still has many upper-class attitudes. She has a master's degree in theology and magic.

Doctor Sabelia is another Magdalene nun. She is the head librarian and supervises many graduate students' research projects. Few can surpass her knowledge of necromancy. See *Doctor Sabelia, the Head Librarian* (pp. 51-52).

The masters of St. Magdalene's are those scholars who teach students and perform research at the college. At present, there are 40 masters: 17 teach magic and/or thaumatology, and the remainder lecture on law, philosophy, medicine, or theology.

Order on the college grounds are enforced by the proctors.

The Proctors

The proctors are stone gargoyles created through a Golem spell designed by Doctor Sabelia. They are obedient to her and the chancellor. They are sent to punish bad students and protect or retrieve college property. A couple of them are usually perched atop St. Magdalene's Church or in front of the library, while the rest are off on missions. They sometimes wear hooded monk's robes, making them look hunchbacked due to their stubby wings.

ST: 19	HP: 30	Speed: 6.25
DX: 11	Will: 8	Move: 12 (air)
IQ: 8	Per: 10	Weight: 1/4 ton
HT: 14	FP: N/A	SM: 0

Dodge: 9	Parry: 10	DR: 4
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Stone Claws (14): 2d+2 crushing. Reach C.

Tail (12): 2d+3 impaling. Reach C.

Traits: Appearance (Monstrous); Automaton; Cannot Learn; Claws (Blunt); Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Flight (Small Wings); Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; No Blood); Night Vision 5; Pressure Support 3; Reprogrammable; Single-Minded; Striker (Tail; Impaling; Clumsy, -2 to hit); Unaging; Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Vacuum Support.

Features: Neither has nor spends FP.

Skills: Brawling-14; Tracking-12.

THE STUDENT BODY

The students are evenly divided between young men and women, with a typical age of 15 to 21. One-third of them are mages, of which half are also studying theology to become priests or nuns. A quarter of all students are gentry. The rest are mainly upper commons, except for a few studying under scholarships. Such yokels are teased unmercifully by their betters, until they demonstrate sufficient skill to fend them off. About a dozen students each year are foreigners, mainly mages. Non-humans other than dwarves are very rare; last year, for example, three goblins and one elf were accepted as students.

Being young, the students of St. Magdalene's are a high-spirited lot. Taverns and rooming houses that cater to students are considered their "property." Just five years ago, some students decided the wine being sold at the Mandrake's Thirst tavern was sour; after one angry novice Entombed the tavern keeper, a riot broke out between the "Town" and the "Gown" that lasted three days and left 17 people dead.

Duels between students are commonplace. Many stem from rivalries between various student clubs or masters, or affairs of the heart. These follow the formal customs for dueling in Abydos. Duels attract spectators as well as witnesses, and betting is common.

Upper-class students have the deplorable habit of exploiting and humiliating novices through dares, extortion, and bullying. Aside from dueling, other remedies are to join one of the student societies, or show off one's skill or courage by a flashy display of power. The faculty will intervene only if hazing gets out of control, e.g., using a Charm spell to make someone dance a jig in a local tavern is acceptable, but Charming them into having sex against their will or committing a crime would be out of bounds. Of course, some students are too frightened to report abuse, so more serious acts may take place anyway.

Students who aren't wealthy often earn extra money by acting as scribes, copyists, and tutors for other students, or, in the case of mages, selling their skills on the street to those who wish to buy spells but can't afford quality.

Student duels are common.

Student Societies

Students may belong to these social clubs, though only about one in six students actually do. Members in good standing may take the clubs or their senior members Patrons or Allies, depending on their standing in the society.

For an example of a student society member, see *Megethia Andronica* (pp. 53-54).

Rose Society

The Rose Society is for "young ladies of superior refinement." Joining it requires Status 1+, an invitation from two other members, and a society vote. Most members are of the gentry and act to keep it that way. They put on glamorous high-society masked balls at each solstice and equinox, and their members dominate the school fencing competitions. They get into numerous duels, often with each other or the Hecate Club; taking it as an Enemy (Rival) might be justified. The Rose Society is known for elaborate and sometimes dangerous initiation rites, such as spending nights in haunted houses.

Society of Solomon

The Society of Solomon is an old, respected, and exclusively male club. They rent inns for wild monthly parties, as well as hosting regular philosophical debates. An "Old Boy's Club" of former members include many of the city's elite. Rumors have surfaced of private gatherings for a secret "inner circle" of the Solomons, where black-magic ceremonies and demon summoning take place. These aren't taken seriously yet, as the Solomons come from the city's most respected families.

Hecate Club

The Hecate Club is open to students displaying “strength of character, body, and mind.” Formed five years ago, it is smaller than the other Societies but takes an active role in protecting students from abusers. Members are generally regarded as upstarts by the others and get into many fights with them. The better known club members often have one or both of the other clubs as an Enemy (rival).

THE FLESH LIBRARY

Nicasia Hall is the library of Saint Magdalene's. The mundane collection includes many textbooks on magical (especially necromantic) theory, supernatural creatures, the names of demons (“for purposes of banishing them”), and lengthy discussions of the lives and works of numerous famous and infamous mages.

At the core of the library are the grimoires. These contain all widely known spells (GM's option, but certainly nearly all spells practiced on Yrth), as well as some unique necromantic spells invented at the college. All these works are tattooed upon the bodies of slaves, who are known as “flesh scrolls.”

The custom of flesh scrolls originated after Lady Ravenjoy wished to consult a certain work, only to have found it eaten by mice. The six nuns who were the library's keepers became the first of the new scrolls, with Lady Ravenjoy graciously donating a large number of her own personal slaves to provide appropriate writing matter for the remainder. Over the centuries, the

librarians have become more fastidious; now only the most physically attractive slaves, male or female, are chosen.

If a flesh scroll dies or is otherwise disfigured, the formula is copied onto another, and the original scroll (live or dead) is cremated. In this way, the librarians ensure all works remain up to date and do not fade with time. If a scroll is lost, master mages in the college consult their personal grimoires and compare notes, to ensure a new scroll is correct.

There are over 1,000 flesh scrolls in the Flesh Library, one for each spell, with three or four dozen kept in each of its 21 rooms and chambers. Each flesh scroll's wrists are manacled to a bracket in the ceiling, keeping its arms from getting in the way of those who wish to view the writing. A brass collar is also attached, with a catalog number. Scrolls are all under the Suspended Animation spell; that way they do not eat, drink, relieve themselves, or complain.

Scrolls are occasionally awakened when someone wishes to check one out of the library: Rather than lug an unconscious body around, it's easier for the head librarian to cast an Awaken spell, have the scroll led to a new location, then cast another Suspended Animation spell after the scroll is returned. Because the borrower must properly feed and clean the flesh scroll while it is in his possession, some mages opt to place a Suspend Animation spell on the scroll for the duration of the loan.

Scrolls may be borrowed for up to a week, then they must be returned for renewal. Someone who is late in returning a scroll pays a fine of \$100 per day for another week; after that, the proctors (p. 25) are sent to retrieve it.

The Life of a Flesh Scroll

The purchase of a flesh scroll is a rare event, occurring when an existing scroll has been lost, disfigured, or killed, or a new spell is developed and must be recorded. If this happens, the head librarian or her assistants visit the slave markets. Only humans and elves are accepted. Youth and beauty are sought after: A scroll might be a lovely peasant girl sold by her debt-ridden parents, or a handsome highwayman enslaved for his crimes.

A new scroll is taken to the library cellar and secured to a table. First, the flesh scroll's tongue is surgically removed. The procedure is supervised by the head librarian to prevent undue shock or bleeding. Next, each one is cleaned and shaved. Finally, the tattooing process begins, which can take three to five painful days. The artist inscribes the words as they are read by one of the librarian's assistants. The scroll remains chained, but it may be fed.

When the tattoo is finished, the slave is washed, anointed with scented oils, then led naked from the chamber and up to the Flesh Library. There the scroll experiences the horror of seeing others like himself as he is led to his place and manacled, where the head librarian casts a Suspended Animation spell upon the victim.

A flesh scroll has the disadvantages Mute, Social Stigma (Valuable Property), and Social Status -2 (Slave). The tattoos do not lower the character's Appearance, since they do not cover the face, hands, or feet.

Many flesh scrolls are centuries old, aging a few hours or days of every year, as someone borrows them. They live

a strange nightmarish existence as years pass them by, until they are awakened by the words of the head librarian and pass briefly into the keeping of some strange wizard. Most are taken to the borrower's study, where they are kept chained to a wall or desk while being consulted or copied, then returned.

Upon being awakened for the first time, most scrolls struggle, attempt to communicate, or shed tears; as they are mute and manacled, they are unlikely to achieve much. After a few awakenings, many flesh scrolls retreat into passive acceptance or go mad; a few try to make the best of their weird existence.

Some borrowers choose to interact with their scrolls, since, after all, they are alive, and in many cases, have seen some interesting places (like the interiors of other wizards' studies. A scroll cannot talk, but telepathy spells, writing (if the scroll is literate), or crude sign language are possible.

As all the scrolls are extremely attractive, some borrowers have been tempted to become intimate with them. Provided that the scroll is returned cleaned, the head librarian does not complain. In a few rare situations over the centuries, a borrower has been unwise enough to have befriended or even fallen in love with a flesh scroll, and one or two scrolls have managed to escape. As a matter of policy, the library does not approve of such liaisons, and will not release scrolls from its custody willingly.

If a scroll is lost, destroyed, or disfigured, the borrower has a week to find a suitable replacement. Since few people are foolish enough to engage in such activities, no set additional punishment has been set, but it is widely believed that the head librarian will either use the perpetrator to replace the slave (if they are pretty enough) or use him as an experimental research subject, then add him to the undead staff.

Here are three examples of unique spells available on flesh scrolls.

False Resurrection

Regular

This spell is identical to Resurrection except that after being raised, the subject only remains alive for as many days as his HT. After this time, he must make a HT-4 every hour, with failure indicating that he crumples to dust.

A proper Resurrection spell cast before this time changes this temporary resurrection into a permanent one, provided a Resurrection has not already been tried and failed (either before or after False Resurrection was cast).

Cost: 60. *One try.* Can be tried after an actual Resurrection has failed.

Time to cast: 1 hour.

Prerequisites: Soul Jar and Zombie.

Ghost Wind

Area

An icy wind blows through the area, carrying a stench of the grave and a vision of death. The spell has the same effect as Death Vision, but it covers an area, affecting everyone inside it.

Duration: 1 second.

Base cost: 2 (minimum radius 2 yards, cost 4).

Time to cast: 3 seconds.

Prerequisite: Death Vision.

Lesser Zombie

Regular

This spell may be used to animate the corpses of small animals, such as cats or crows. Except for its reduced cost and time to cast, it works just like a Zombie spell, but it only affects corpses that had ST 5 or less, IQ 6 or less, and SM -2 or less.

Duration: The zombie remains animated until destroyed.

Cost: 4.

Time to cast: 30 seconds.

Prerequisites: Summon Spirit and Lend Vitality.

GUILDS

Abydos has dozens of craft and merchant guilds, just like those in other Yrth cities. All the usual trades are represented: Armorsmiths' Guild, Bakers' Guild, Cloth Merchants' Guild, Morticians' Guild, and so on.

Abydos does not have a mages' guild, but as St. Magdalene's College teaches students and grants degrees, it licenses magic as if it were a de-facto guild. If any new humans from Earth pop up due to the Banestorm, the college will take responsibility for dealing with them.

THE ALCHEMISTS' GUILD

This guild represents a dozen master alchemists in the city, as well as their journeymen and apprentices. They sell many healing elixirs, as the death-aspected mana interferes with healing spells. The most popular potions are Health, Sleep, Love, Regeneration, and Foresight, as well as one unique mixture, Preservation of the Dead (see boxed text).

Elixir of Preservation of the Dead

Alternative Name: Elysium.

The subject must be a corpse (or zombie). This elixir arrests all decay for the duration.

Duration: 6 months.

Form: Ointment only.

Cost: \$300.

Recipe: \$125; 1 week; defaults to Alchemy-1.

Guild rules prohibit manufacture of "hostile elixirs" (like Madness) except to fill orders from the Ravens, but not everyone is honest! There are rumors that the criminal Naglfari (p. 29) are trying to influence the election of Alchemists' Guild officers and extorting "protection" from members in the form of elixirs.

THE EUMENIDES GUILD

This is the armsmen's guild of Abydos – its name comes from the Greek furies, spirits who pursued oathbreakers and criminals. It is small, as zombies glut the market for common guards and bouncers, but its 50 members are exceptionally competent. Most work as bounty hunters, bodyguards, and privateer crews. Many are also mages. The guild is mostly male, but it has some women members, such as ex-Ravens.

Any warrior can join, provided he demonstrates combat skills at the guildhall. This is a friendly duel (using blunted weapons and nonlethal spells) with a chosen guild member. The applicant doesn't have to win, just put up a good fight.

The guild charges \$500 to join plus \$50 a year. In return, the organization arranges jobs for its members, since people know to visit the guildhall to when they want a living armsman.

Members can stay at Lostgate Tower (p. 37), which is the guildhall. The group also holds quarterly feasts at Lostgate. The "Captain of the Eumenides" (Guildmaster) is elected each year at the winter feast.

Members are expected to obey the law and show courage and professionalism with clients – they can be voted out if they don't. Eumenides are legally permitted to wear swords within the city as if they were gentry, regardless of their actual Status.

LICH MERCHANTS' GUILD

In Abydos, the purchase and sale of corpses and zombies are legal, just like the slave trade, as long as the transaction involves a member of the Lich Merchants' Guild as either the buyer or seller.

Masters and journeymen of the Lich Merchants' Guild are mages with *Magery 2* and *Zombie* and *Control Zombie* spells. They are legally allowed to animate the dead, provided the dead are animals, pagans, or heretics, or they have permission from the corpse's family or owner. The guild also employs non-mages who work as accountants, zombie buyers, and corpse cleaners.

Lich merchants perform a variety of services. People may hire them to raise dead family members or domestic animals as zombies, usually to perform labor. They also buy unwanted corpses and animate them as zombies, then rent or sell them to others. Finally, they purchase "used" zombies and apply the *Control Zombie* spell to "retrain" them.

Lich merchants charge about \$40 to raise a human-sized or smaller corpse as a zombie; for larger creatures, multiply the cost by (1 + SM).

A typical price for existing zombies is \$100 plus or minus \$10 per character point spent on ST, DX, HT, weapon skills, and any positive Appearance. Thus, a zombie with ST 13 [30], DX 9 [-20] and HT 11 [10] plus eight points spent on *Broadsword* and an *Attractive* [4] appearance sells for \$420. Riding, work, and hunting animals sell for 10% of the animal's sale price. All these prices assume the corpse looks fresh and undamaged. A badly scarred, decaying, or skeletal zombie sells for half this with no

modifiers for Appearance. Fresh zombies already treated with the *Elixir of Preservation of the Dead* cost an extra \$300.

Lich merchants rent zombies out for 10% of their sale price every month, or 1/300 every day. Of course, if the zombie is damaged or destroyed, the renter must pay the full sale price immediately. A fresh zombie must be treated with preservation elixirs to avoid decay and depreciation.

Lich merchants buy corpses or zombies created by someone else for about 20% what a newly created zombie would sell for. However, they can only legally purchase human corpses if they have the permission of the corpse's family (if free) or owner (if a slave). Not all lich merchants are that law abiding, though: some will buy "black market" corpses of dubious provenance, but at half normal price.

THE CORPSEFLAYERS' GUILD

It's unhygienic to let a zombie rot – that can spread disease. For those who cannot afford the alchemical or magical means of preservation, the alternative is smooth, polished bone.

The Corpseflayers Guild work closely with the Lich Merchants. Their craft is to carefully strip a dead body (animated or not) of its flesh without doing any damage to its bones or causing it to "de-animate." Knives, whips, and baths of mild acid are all used.

The shops of the corpseflayers resemble visions of Hell. Inside large warehouses, rows of twitching zombies hang upon hooks as they are flayed with knives and whips, or have their flesh dissolved as they are lowered into vats of acid. It takes a strong stomach or a sadistic soul to work in the guild.

CRIMINALS, GANGS, AND REBELS

These organizations operate outside the law, either too small for authorities to notice or too large to eliminate.

BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS

Known on the street as "the Blood," this is a group of Petrine Christian rebels dedicated to the overthrow of the Lazarite Church and to its replacement by a mainstream Christian hierarchy. Most Bloods are lower commoners of Megalan descent, but a few are people of higher Status with secret Petrine sympathies.

The Blood has about 50 "Soldiers of God" under their command (many of them teenagers). They can count on the sympathy and tacit support of about 1,000 closet Petrines. Half the Blood are experienced fighters; the other half are mostly street thugs.

Even death is not enough to avoid the questions of the Hand of Glory, so the Blood use a cell system where each member knows the real identity of only three other members. They also wear hoods to conceal faces during meetings or operations.

The Blood's present commander is Edward Hook (p. 54). After being driven underground some years back, the Blood eventually reorganized under Hook and renewed their activities. In the last three years, they have killed or severely injured nearly two dozen Lazarite priests, Ravens, and civic leaders, including merchants who have refused to pay them protection money.

They hope to strike at bigger targets, such as the archbishop, the Lady Raven, and members of the senate. The Blood's trademark is a red cross, cut into the foreheads of their victims.

Under the Blood's current leadership, they have become involved in criminal activities, using smuggling and extortion to raise money for the cause. This has led to conflict with the Naglfari, who consider this poaching on their own interests. Several members of both organizations have been killed in intergang warfare.

The Blood are in tenuous contact with sympathizers in Quartedec, including some nobles, merchants, and clergy. Members of the Blood are smuggled out of the city in fishing boats or merchant holds. Upon arriving in Megalos, they raise funds, acquire equipment, and drill with weapons and tactics.

This support is complicated by the fact that the Blood (and other Petrine heretics in the city) do not quite follow the strain of Christianity practiced outside Agartha. Most Blood still follow the Eastern Rite (i.e., Greek Orthodox) faith that existed in Abydos before the coming of Samuel Hood. Curia agents have hinted to the Blood that more support from Quartedec and the Curia would be forthcoming if only they began worshiping in a more mainstream manner. Some cells within the Blood are willing, believing any means are justified to destroy the hated Lazarite heresy; others are unwilling to compromise the faith of their father for tactical gain. A possibility exists that the Blood might splinter into rival factions over this issue.

Typical “Blood”

ST 11; **DX** 12; **IQ** 11; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 13; Per 12; FP 11.

Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 9.

5-6'; 120-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Fanaticism; Patron (Megalan cleric, Templar, or noble in Quartedec, or a high-Status Abydos sympathizer; 6 or less); Secret (Blood member; Possible Death); Trademark (Simple).

Skills: Boating/TL3 (Sailboat)-11; Forgery/TL3-10; Knife-12; Observation-12; Shortsword-13; Smuggling-12; Shadowing-11; Stealth-11; Streetwise-11; Tactics-9.

THE NAGLFARI

The “thieves’ guild” of Abydos, the Naglfari originated as a secret society that formed among Northland slaves brought to Abydos from the Nomad Territories. Over time, they evolved from sorcerer terrorists who used magic to fight back against cruel slave masters to a sinister cabal of criminal magicians and alchemists.

The name “Naglfari” comes from Norse myth – it is the boat made by the trickster god Loki from the nail clippings of the dead, and its sailing will be a sign of Ragnarok, the end of the world. According to Northlander tradition, the slave ships that brought them to Abydos were given this nickname, due to the number of people who died in their holds. This name was adopted by the society to remember their suffering.

The bulk of the Naglfari are the “carls,” ordinary street criminals, most of whom are ethnic Northlanders. Their bosses are the “Hidden Jarls,” neighborhood strongmen who run local gambling, prostitution, smuggling, and extortion rackets. Rivalries between jarls are common; a stronger jarl may force a weaker to pay tribute, or acknowledge him “Jarl of the Naglfari” or “Jarl of Jarls.” However, the last Jarl of Jarls was assassinated recently, which has led to chaos in the underworld.

The Naglfari are strongest among the lower commoners, especially Northlanders. They run protection rackets, focusing on inns, dockyards, brothels, pawn shops, and fences. However, they also regulate criminal activity, and they are tolerated by the authorities as long as they police themselves and restrict their violence to each other and to the Northlander minority. A recent three-way “gang war” between Naglfari jarls and the Blood has stretched that tolerance, as have attempts by one of the jarls – the authorities aren’t sure which – to take over the Alchemists’ Guild.

A typical carl is detailed below. For a jarl, see *Ogmund Snorrison* (pp. 54-55).

Typical Carl

ST 12; **DX** 12; **IQ** 10; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12; Will 11; Per 11; FP 11.

Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 9.

5-6'; 120-180 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Enemies (Ravens; Watcher); Enemies (Bloods or rival Naglfari gang; Rival); Patron (Jarl; 9 or less).

Skills: Axe/Mace-12 or Shortsword-12; Boating/TL3 (Sailboat)-11; Brawling-13; First Aid/TL3-11; Knife-12;

Merchant-9; Intimidation-12; Savior-Faire (Mafia)-12; Sex Appeal-10; Smuggling-11; Stealth-10; Streetwise-12.

The Hanged Men

The Naglfari jarls employ a secret cadre known as the “Hanged Men,” who act as elite enforcers and assassins. The Hanged Men get their name from an initiation ceremony in which they are nailed to an oak tree for a night and a day – a ritual that recalls both Christ’s ordeal on the Cross and the shamanic initiation the god Odin underwent in Norse myth. Some Hanged Men specialize in Necromantic, Body Control, and Animal magic; others are were-creatures, especially werebears and werewolves.

For an example of a Hanged Man, see *Ragnar Bjornsson* (p. 55).



THE ROOFRATS

The Roofrats are gangs of teenage runaways who live on and above the rooftops and columns of Abydos. Expert climbers, they nest in the upper floors of abandoned buildings. They trap pigeons, crows, and squirrels for food, supplemented by the proceeds of petty larceny, spying, and occasional cat burglary.

Few see much of them: a glimpse out a window of a grubby boy using a grappling hook to swing across a gap between roofs, or a cast fishing line snapping down to snag a pastry from a peddler’s stall.

Some Roofrat gangs have adult connections – Naglfari fences, cat burglars, or stylites, for instance. The Roofrats are an excellent information source on events happening above ground, as well as secret ways to get around the city.

The seven Roofrat gangs are distinguished by different color headbands and marked by occasional fierce rivalries over territories. Gangs have a dozen members each. They recruit runaway children, with initiations involving progressively more difficult climbs and thefts. Failures splatter across the city streets.

Roofrats swear by St. Judas they’ll never touch ground. A Roofrat who breaks this vow is disgraced and unclean: He’s driven away until he does something suitably impressive. Few Roofrats live past late teens; survivors end up as either professional thieves or crippled beggars, depending on how they left.

Roofrat

ST 9; **DX** 13; **IQ** 10; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9; Will 11; Per 11; FP 11.

Basic Speed 6; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 9.

5-6'; 100-150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Gang members; Built on 100%; 6-10; 12 or less); Compulsive Behavior (Climbing) (12); Enemies (Cat Fairy; Hunter); Overconfidence (12); Minor Vow (Never touch ground while in gang); Status -1; Wealth (Poor).

Skills: Acrobatics-13; Area Knowledge (Roofs of Abydos)-11; Climbing-14; Brawling-13; Fast-Talk-10; Filch-13; First Aid/TL3-10; Fishing-11; Jumping-13; Knife-13; Scrounging-11; Stealth-12; Streetwise-11; Throwing-12; Urban Survival-10.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CITY

The Old City of Abydos stands on the east bank of the river Charon, surrounded by high walls showing the unmistakable signs of dwarven masonry. Rising above all are the lofty cathedral of St. Lazarus and the grim Citadel of Birds. From the towers fly the city's banner: a black raven on a silver field.

*Across the river are busy dockyards and another wall enclosing the thriving port of Gebura-on-Charon, or "Gebura Town" as the locals refer to it. Merchant galleys in the Megalan style, local fishing boats and barges, and even some barbarous northern longships can be seen at port. Today a great war galley, the **Boneshark**, arrived in port, crewed by undead oarsmen and fierce Northland mercenaries, fresh from a raid against the Empire. Zombies unloaded loot, captives for the slave market and fresh corpses for the city's "meat market."*

Connecting the Old City with the port of Gebura is the imposing Charon Bridge. This stone bridge is fortified, with a gate

house at each end. Its span prevents tall-masted ships from sailing upriver past Abydos, which may be one reason why the Dragon's legions have had trouble landing troops here.

*– Tim of Tredroy, **My Journeys Among the Northern Heretics***

Two roads lead out of Abydos. The most traveled leaves Northgate and runs northwest, following for a time the east bank of the Charon. Near the city, the road is crowded with wagons and carts bringing supplies from busy farms and orchards. After several miles, the farms give way to dreary woods, foreboding monasteries, and villages where the undead outnumber the living.

The south road is Kadia's Way. It passes a few small hamlets in the first mile, then splits in two. The main road runs south to Lake Styx, about two miles from the city; the eastern fork leads to quarries and mines in the Sardis hills.

WALLS AND TOWERS

The city's walls enclose it on all sides, even along the river, where they act as a dike against the Charon flooding. These structures are 20-25 yards high and three yards thick. A walkway runs atop them, protected by battlements and accessible by stairs in the towers.

There are 23 towers, one of which (Lostgate Tower) is a converted gate. Each is 30 yards tall and eight wide, topped with battlements and mounting a scorpion (p. B281) catapult. Each tower has six stories and a cellar. The main entrance is at the tower's base inside the city, and doors open onto the walls on either side. Each tower is garrisoned by a company of the Polished Bone or a band of Northland Guards.

The walls surrounding Abydos show the signs of dwarven masonry.

GATES

Abydos has three working gates (and the sealed Lostgate). Every gatehouse is occupied by a platoon of the Polished Bone under a Raven tribune. Gates are made of thick wood reinforced by iron, barred, with a heavy spiked portcullis. Using a mechanism inside the gatehouse, it takes 20 seconds to open or close a gate. The portcullis mechanism takes only two seconds

to work. When released, it falls in less than a second, and does 4d impaling damage to anyone under it who fails to Dodge. Winching up the portcullis takes 10 seconds.

City gates are opened at dawn and barred at sunset, but the guards may permit entry at night for emergencies. During daytime hours, each gatehouse is also manned by a customs inspector and a dozen Northland Guards who stand by to collect tolls: \$1/head (including undead and animals) and a 5% duty on goods, both doubled for non-citizens.

The Old City gates are:

Northgate is on Northgate Road. Along the road outside this gate is a village of shacks and stalls where non-citizens try to get hired as guides and day laborers. Northgate is very busy in the morning, with long lines of farmers' wagons making deliveries.

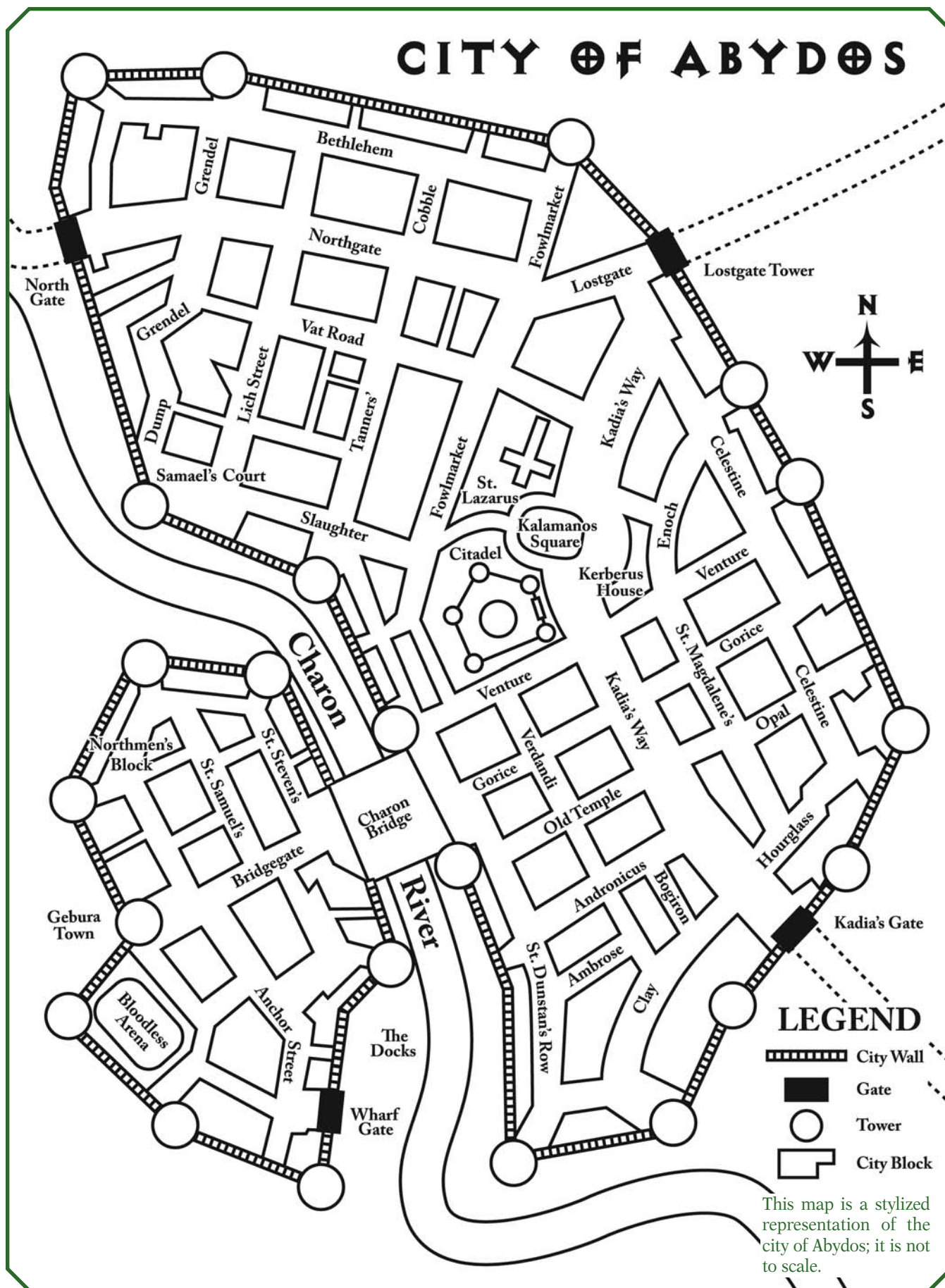
Kadia's Gate faces the south road, Kadia's Way. Besides farm carts, wagon loads of stone and ore from the quarries enter here.

Charon Gate faces west, opening onto Charon Bridge. The gate is busy with traffic to and from the port town.

Lostgate has been converted into a tower and no longer opens.

Gebura-on-Charon has two gates: *Wharfgate* faces east onto the wharves and dockyards, and *Bridge Gate* guards the west-side of Charon Bridge. Both see plenty of traffic.

Due to customs and toll collections, waits in line of five to 10 minute to get into Abydos are common, especially at Northgate or Wharfgate. Water sellers do good business on hot days (and pickpockets may work the crowds).



THE OLD CITY

The Old City is a jumble of narrow roads and tall, closely spaced buildings. Most streets are only five yards wide, flanked by buildings that are three stories high and overhang the road. Falling tiles and emptied chamber pots are a constant hazard.

Addresses are unnumbered: Shops and major buildings have signs hanging outside; otherwise, finding an address requires inquiries. Most buildings have shops or offices on the first floor and apartments above. Customers rarely enter shops; shutters in front fold down each morning to form a counter where goods are displayed.

The undead are everywhere, from armored soldiers of the Polished Bone on guard at gates and public buildings to skeletons sweeping streets and zombie oxen pulling farm carts. Many zombies are preserved by alchemy or are skeletons, but scraps of rotted flesh litter busy streets, keeping the city scavengers busy.

All main streets on the stylized map of Abydos (p. 31) are described below, often followed by sample establishments. A great many small alleys also exist in addition to those shown on the map. The establishments detailed below are examples; there are dozens more on each street. The GM should create and people them as needed.

AMBROSE STREET

This street is devoted to candlestick makers, with their guild hall and a parish church, St. Ambrose.

Simon Wickman's Shop

Master Wickman and his two apprentices make candles and incense sticks. The master also knows a secret alchemical formula for creating "corpse candles." These resemble ordinary tallow candles, but they last six times as long, and their flame is invisible and useless to anyone but undead or necromancers. (For these purposes, a necromancer is anyone who knows a Necromancy spell.) Master Wickman sells them for \$20 each to clients who want a light that can't be seen by ordinary folk. Corpse candles require fat rendered down from an intelligent being (one corpse is good for 10 candles). Wickman visits the meat market each month for supplies.

ANDRONICUS ROAD

The craft shops of the city's silver and goldsmiths line this street. While they do make jewelry, their regular work is mainly silver tableware and gold leaf to illuminate manuscripts.

Master William Auric's Shop

Auric is one of the street's more prosperous goldsmiths. Age 44, with a squint but a steady hand, he is married, active in guild politics, and hopes to one day serve as guildmaster. He will appraise gold and silver ornaments for a small fee (\$10) and an offer to broker (10% commission) their resale.

Like most goldsmiths, he is afraid of thieves. His shop has \$5d × \$10,000 in gold bars, dust, and jewelry. His precautions are typical: Anything not worked on is in a iron strongbox chained to the floor, and there are 1" steel bars on windows. His apprentices

sleep in the workshop at night, and two skeletal laborers with light clubs guard the box. Auric paid Magister Aethera (p. 44) to enchant his doors with a Magelock (power 15) spell and keep a Delay-16 with Great Voice-16 spell on the strong box to shout "Thieves!" for a minute if anyone but Auric touches it.

BETHLEHEM ROAD

This busy street smells of sawdust, and it resonates with the pounding of hammers and grunts of men at work. Carpentry, woodcarving, sign-painting, and wagon-making shops are located here. Just off Bethlehem Road is Bowmen's Alley (not shown on the map) with fletchers and bowyers.

The Monastery of St. Judas Iscariot

On a low hill at the top of Bethlehem road, 71 Poor Brothers (p. 23) pray and labor within the high walls of St. Judas. They reside a three-story brick-and-wood monastery with barred windows. Behind it is a vegetable garden. Besides the chapel and the cells of the monks, there is a large workhouse where furniture (including church benches) are made. These earn funds that provide for the maintenance of the order and for charity to poor widows.

Orphans, outlaws, and debtors are granted sanctuary from the law if they can reach here, but only if they agree to abide by the Poor Brothers' strict rules, which include praying according to a schedule, no leaving the monastery for the first two years, and no speaking unless spoken to. Disobedience earns a flogging and expulsion.

CELESTINE ROAD

This street's proximity to St. Magdalene's makes it a natural site for bookshops. Celestine is home to nine bookshops, 19 bookbinders, six writing-supply shops (selling quills, ink, and parchment), and several clerk-copyists. Clergy, mages, and students often browse here. Books include popular romances, Lazarite Bibles (especially the Renewed Testament), and tomes of philosophy, natural history, and the occult. Browsers will find many texts written in Greek as well as Latin and English.

Books are much cheaper on Yrth than in Earth's Middle Age; Copy and Scribe spells allow copies to be made in a few days rather than taking months. Most books sell for about \$1/page; a secondhand grimoire is \$10 per spell in it, but some contain errors (1 in 6 chance; if it has mistakes, the spell learned won't work or will produce backfires on any failure).

Lazarus Clark, Copyist

Clark, 23, is a professional scribe. A graduate of St. Magdalene's, he knows a few Air, Sound, and Making and Breaking spells beyond Scribe and Copy. He supplements his copyist work with secretarial jobs for the illiterate or those who want fine calligraphy for important letters. As a result, he is a useful contact who knows what a large number of people are doing. He is literate in English, Latin, and Greek, and charges \$10/page to compose a letter (Calligraphy-15, Writing-12) or \$1/page for copying. He averages 60 pages/day.

The Eye in the Cloud

Master Cassius Crayne and his wife, Pearl, run this book shop that (like many book shops) is also a tavern and library. The Cloud stays open late, crowded with students and the occasional master from St. Magdalene's, all drinking, trying to study, or haggling with Crayne about book prices. Pearl and her pretty-but-dead daughter Jewel (who died of a fever) serve apple cider (\$1) and cheap wine (\$2).

Crayne has 122 books. Half his collection are school textbooks on subjects such as Latin grammar, the city's legal system, or basic spells. The rest are Greek and Latin classics such as Aristotle and Ovid; popular romances like the recent *Merry Harpist of Caithness*; collections of bawdy or humorous folktales; and weighty theological tomes such as the Bible, the Renewed Testament, and the works of St. Augustine.

Most of his books are in simple wood-and-leather bindings, but they are worth \$100-600 each. They are kept in chests in a locked room in the back of the tavern. Customers rent them and, if necessary, copy them themselves; Crayne's fee is 2% of their price per day. Crayne is interested in acquiring new works, but he prefers to rent the book and hire a copyist instead. He has prudently invested in a double-cost Fireproof spell (power 15) that covers the entire shop. His book chests are protected by Magelocks and a skeletal guard.

Crayne's aunt Agatha was a fur trader and treasure hunter (long since missing); he inherited several maps of the Whitehood Mountains, some damaged and others purportedly showing abandoned dwarf mines (overrun by orcs or dragons) and other likely locations for adventure. Maps can be consulted for \$10/hour.

COBBLE ROAD

On this street, the constant tapping of cobblers' hammers begins at dawn and does not let up until sundown. Workers include 17 makers of shoes and boots, two makers of boot laces, a blacksmith who specializes in hob nails, and five buckle makers.

CLAY STREET AND BOGIRON ALLEY

Several potters, a few glazers, and a large brickyard are on this street. On the east end is Bogiron Alley, dominated by the halls of the Miners' Guild and the Charcoal Burners. Here smiths buy lumps of metal and charcoal for their furnaces, and they haggle over prices of raw materials with miners from the country quarries.

ST. DUNSTAN'S ROW

The ringing sound of hammer against anvil echoes down this long street, home to the city's blacksmiths. Forge work requires a master and apprentice: One works the bellows to pump air into the furnace, as the other manipulates tongs to hold the metal in the fire. When it's hot enough, the metal is taken to the anvil, where they alternate striking blows with heavy hammers, beating the metal into shape – then the piece goes back to the

The Dogs of Abydos

Many living dogs roam the streets of Abydos. Some are used for defending property, and some are wild. All of them are well-fed.

ST: 9	HP: 9	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 10
IQ: 4	Per: 12	Weight: 90 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Bite (14): 1d-2 cutting.

Traits: Chummy; Discriminatory Smell; Domestic Animal; Quadruped; Sharp Teeth.

Skills: Brawling-14; Tracking-13.

Notes: Tracking dogs have Tracking-15.

furnace for more heating, then more hammering, over and over again. Zombies are used for repetitive work, but many smiths prefer a live human who knows what he's doing.

Most smiths forge ordinary items, such as horseshoes, nails, tools, wheel and shield rims, knives, wire, and chainmail. Heads for spears, axes, maces, and arrows are also for sale. The elite smiths make swords and plate armor.

Lodin Forkbeard's Smithy

Lodin Forkbeard is a dwarven armorer. His shop is a large one, with four forges; he specializes in church bells, axes, and swords. He can make *fine* and *very fine* weapons. He has designed several sets of magical weapons and armor for wealthy customers. Visiting dwarves think he's strange, but they admire his skill.

Besides his six dwarf apprentices, he employs husky zombie laborers. Lodin and two of his apprentices know Enchant and most weapon and armor Enchantments (as well as related spells like Name) at skill-16.

He is a convert to the Lazarite faith and swears "by the bells of St. Gilli."

ENOCH ROAD

This tree-lined cobblestone road has large, ivy-covered houses owned by wealthy professionals, including physicians, lawyers, architects, scholars, and master mages.

House of Prospectus Blake

The master mage Prospectus Blake (see pp. 52-53) lives here in a fine mansion with a skylight. He has a wizardly laboratory complete with a Pentagram and many defensive enchantments, as well as undead servants. Blake teaches at St. Magdalene's, so he often has a dozen students over for lectures, usually with a flesh scroll or two present (he likes to consult original texts).

House of Dr. Gideon Balsamon

Balsamon is a master physician; in this death-aspected city, people sometimes prefer real doctors rather than risk magical healing. Balsamon charges \$10/day for physician's care and \$20-70 for surgical operations and poison antidotes.

Balsamon is a lean cadaverous figure in his 40s, with a black sense of humor. He loves plants, so he has a walled garden filled with exotic fungi and herbs, some poisonous, many useful. He knows Diagnosis, First Aid, Hypnotism, Physician, and Surgery at skill 18, but his real love is toxicology (Poisons-20). He brews poisons and buys slaves to test his antidotes. He keeps cages of poisonous insects, spiders, and snakes. He will sell only antidotes, but he has many poisons stored in his lab.

THE GARDEN OF TENELOPE

This park is bounded by Enoch Road, Celestine Road, and St. Magdalene's Street. It covers most of a city block. A pathway of carefully raked gravel winds between dozens of white birch trees and high juniper bushes. In the center is a well-tended circle of black and white roses, surrounding a stone cross marking a grave. The cross is inscribed in Latin and Elvish:

*Lady Tenelope of Kimberlorn
Years of the City 1755-1832
Gentle lover, bright sorceress,
Stolen from me by her cruel kin.
Let them tend her grave evermore,
their souls be damned to Hell.*

Four zombie skeletons care for the garden with rakes and shears. They wear tattered, faded elven robes and thrusting broadswords (normally sheathed). The skeletal guardians attack anyone attempting to interfere with the garden, themselves, or the grave; otherwise, they simply go about their work, raking leaves, pruning flowers, and cutting grass.

Buried two yards under the stone is a coffin holding the corpse of an elven woman. She wears black burial shroud with a bejeweled silver cross worth \$2,000 and a *fine* short sword on her breast. The corpse is well preserved and animated (use Skeleton Knight statistics, p. 22); it will defend itself if disturbed.

This shadowed garden is a favorite meeting place for young lovers, especially lesbians; there is a 2-in-6 chance during any warm night that a romantic couple can be found here.

The story behind the garden is known to students of Abydosian literature. As related in the anonymous poem "Destasia and Tenelope," Tenelope of Kimberlorn, an elven lady of a noble house from western Megalos, was a secret student of necromancy. When her studies were discovered, she

fled the elvenwood and traveled to Abydos. While studying at St. Magdalene's, she met Lady Raven Destasia Laskarina; Tenelope became Destasia's apprentice and, later, her lover.

Tragically, Tenelope's four brothers felt her actions and lifestyle dishonored their clan. One April night in 1842, they traveled to the city, caught up with her in the Lady Raven's garden, and tried to carry her off. The Lady Raven's guards intervened, and in the resulting fight, Tenelope was slain. The grieving Destasia wreaked horrible vengeance on her brothers: They were flayed alive, then reanimated to tend their sister's grave for as long as the city lasted.

Elven characters may recognize the insignia of the house of Kimberlorn on the robes, yet not know what happened to the lady, which was hushed up. Scholars who study Abydosian poetry or history will recognize the story on a successful Literature or History-2 roll.

FOWLMARKET ROAD

Home to the city's bird butchers and egg sellers. Ducks, geese, and chickens flop about on counters, legs trussed, or hang limply from hooks above the stalls. It is busiest early in the morning when housewives and maids do their poultry shopping. It's a good place to pick up gossip.

On the street's north side are laundresses. For \$1-2 per bundle, clothes are cleaned in wooden troughs, soaked in wood ash and soda, pounded, rinsed, and hung up to dry. Heavy stains are removed by rubbing them in wine and chicken feathers rinsed in hot water. Laundresses also clean skeletons at \$3 each.

GRENDAL ROAD

Grendel Road is home to several blocks of dreary, crumbling tenements inhabited by many of Abydos' poor, packed together two or three families to a room. Being downwind of Lich Street, what the locals call "bad air" has lowered rents and housing prices.

This is a good place to find rooms suitable for living at Status 0 or less.

Bogbottom Dump

On Grendel Road, this is a overgrown vacant lot used as a dumping site for garbage, offal, rotten wood, stillborn infants, crippled zombies, and alchemical waste. Some brave dogs and beggars pick through the dump, seeking scraps and salvage. Fierce rat swarms, some with extra legs or heads, are found here, as well as occasional twitching zombie torsos. Few visit the dump at night; the way the weeds glow in the dark is unnerving. Who knows what strange things may be breeding here?

Fierce rats, some with extra legs or heads, swarm around Bogbottom Dump. Who knows what other strange things may be breeding among the garbage and alchemical waste dumped here?

Sad Agnes' Well

This is one of the city's two public wells (most water is from the Charon). Agnes, a poor laundress, begged here for coins to buy an elixir to cure her sick husband, but he died before she could afford it. She drowned herself; her spirit haunts the well. Unless a penny is tossed in when water is drawn, Agnes gets angry. At daytime, beggars congregate here, telling the story and hoping for charity in Sad Agnes' memory.

Anyone who drinks water drawn from the well but does not pay for it must make a Will roll. Failure means that when they next sleep, they suffer the effect of a Nightmare spell, reliving Agnes' despair and death. A critical failure means they sleepwalk toward the nearest deep body of water and jump in, unless noticed and awakened first. They will wake upon hitting the water, so may avoid drowning by making a Swimming roll.

Under 20 yards of dark water is \$1,664, in a mix of copper and a few silver coins. Agnes will manifest as a Skull-Spirit to attack anyone who enters to remove coins. Successful use of Exorcism skill accompanied by a shower of coins dispels the spirit. Necromantic spells such as Repel Spirit or Turn Spirit have their usual effect, of course, but don't forget to apply range penalties if casting from the top of the well down to the bottom.

GORICE ROAD

This rundown street has many old rooming houses and cheap apartments, but also a certain bohemian character. Residents include college students, actors, and artists, among them famous painter Canidia Nightingale (p. 15). The street is plastered with hand bills advertising the Gorice Road Theater Company and the Ghost Troupe (p. 16).

The Gorice Road Theater

This month, the hall advertises the *Widow of Windspider Hill*, the latest play by master playwright Julian Swyft. It's a bedroom farce about a young widow, her husband (now a zombie), and her three suitors. Its surprise ending has made it the talk of the town; it would be unfair to reveal who is really a woman in disguise.

The troupe has 30 members, plus 12 undead stage hands. It puts on new plays in alternate months, spending the rest of the time rehearsing. Tickets are \$2 for standing room, \$5 for a stool, and \$20 for the best seats.

Loaves and Fishes

This cheap food stall is owned by Heressa the Knife (age 37), a scarred ex-Raven with only one hand who used to work with Anastasia Psilena (see pp. 49-50); she lost the other in an explosion while raiding an alchemist's shop. She retired when Regeneration failed. She knows Create Food-15, and can turn waste and slop into a hot meal in a few seconds, making the cheapest fast food in Abydos. Her eat-and-run customers are students, artists, and Ravens. Meals are \$1 each.

Mother Gramble's Rooming House

Mother Gramble (age 50) is the landlady of this comfortable boarding house. She is a stern matron with a pair of big wolfhounds, one of whom is a skeleton. Her current

tenants are students; she has four rooms unoccupied. Gramble charges \$400/month for room and board, suitable for Status 0 residents.

HOURLASS ROAD

The city's clockmakers, glassblowers, and locksmiths congregate along this road. There are also shops selling antiques and necromantic toys.

Infernal Devices

Grizzled old Thomas Chessman (age 54) is a retired siege engineer who makes a living building cunning mechanical traps like tripwire crossbows, swinging blades, and sliding door pits. He's also a reserve sergeant in the city militia.

His main customers are several wealthy merchants, who feel that in a town of sorcerers, spells are not a perfect defense. While he will not sell to any obvious criminals, he does not ask questions.

Chessman has Engineer (Combat)/TL3-17 and Traps/TL3-16. He and his wife, Thea, are proud of their daughter, Aethera, who worked her way through college and has set up shop as a master mage herself (see p. 44).

KADIA'S WAY

This is the busiest main street of the Old City. Kadia's Way is about twice as wide as most other streets, and it is paved with stone. Its businesses include inns, taverns, and carters closer to the gate, and several markets, restaurants, and public buildings further along.

The Rose and Serpent

This large inn has 30 rooms and stabling for a dozen mounts. It has a lively common room, as well as an upstairs dining room that can be reserved for private parties. The Rose and Serpent is the choice of rich travelers, adventurers, and merchants visiting the city, if they have no friends or relatives to take them in. As such, the place is good for tales and gossip.

Adam Crabbe, the innkeeper, employs an excellent cook, Rosemary, who specializes in Megalan cuisine. Crabbe makes regular use of Judd Verminsbane's exterminator service, so the beds are mostly free of bugs.

Crabbe charges \$40/night for a room with two beds, including meals. Drinks are extra, but he offers some excellent Northland brandies (\$3/bottle) and a selection of local wines (\$2). Crabbe also offers a "Praetor's Suite" with better furnishings that rents for twice as much. He reserves the upstairs dining room to parties for \$50/evening plus an extra \$5/guest for meals.

The Crown of Thorns

The Exazenos family has owned this upscale restaurant for generations. It is known for its elegant waiters in black-and-red livery and its garden courtyard complete with fountain (which makes eavesdropping from nearby tables difficult).

The menu is good, especially a delectable roast duckling in herb sauce (\$6) so addictive it was denounced by the Abbot of St. Judas as sinful. The pheasant in cream sauce (\$7) is also good, as is the selection of aged Agarthan wines (\$4/bottle).

According to Lazarite doctrine, flesh is only clay; when the Day of Judgement comes, those without bodies will be given new ones formed out of air.

The Crown is a favorite meeting place for guild masters, rich merchants, and senior clergy. Master Leo Exazenos is insistent on maintaining his establishment's dignity: Tables are reservation-only, and unless one has Status 2+, it's always full.

Michael Kalamanos Square

This paved square is Abydos' main marketplace. Each morning, dozens of itinerant peddlers and tinkers set up stalls and carts here, and hundreds of customers crowd into the square. Mixing with them are mimes, jugglers, and musicians performing in hope of a copper or two, as well as some pickpockets.

Many poor commoners and students do daily shopping in the market. New wares are found on their own craft streets, but here are secondhand goods at cut rate prices: cheap-quality knives, axes, and other tools, plus old clothing. Other goods include flowers (\$1), ice skates (\$20), painted icons of the Lazarite saints (\$10-50), and more. Food carts sell apples and pears (\$1 each), pastries filled with cheese, chopped egg, onion, or fruit (\$1); sausages (\$2); chicken and eel pies (\$2); and beer (\$1 per standard-sized mug; customers must supply their own mugs). A busy public well in the center of the square provides fresh water.

Towering over the square is a 20-yard-tall column. It once held a statue of Baron Michael Kalamanos, but his statue fell off during a storm. The top of the column (two yards wide) is now favored as a perch by pigeons and stylites. The present occupant is Angelus Pious, a deaf Lazarite priest. He lowers his rain bucket on a rope twice a week; the faithful put in it their donations of food, as well as requests to pray for their souls.

Kerberus House

Across from Michael Kalamanos Square is a large, ugly stone hall, with two adjoining wooden wings and a wide flight of stone steps. This is Kerberus House, the senate building, where Abydos' laws and policy are made. On one side of the steps a marble block sports a bronze statue of Lady Ravenjoy on a rearing horse, a pack of dogs baying at her heel.

The hall is guarded by a pair of Ravens supported by two squads of Polished Bone guards. Iron-bound double doors open into the senate hall that fills most of Kerberus House. Senators sit on stools, in an arc facing the praetor's High Seat. The hall is decorated with trophies, including the dragon prow of an ancient Nomad longship and the standards of two Megalan legions destroyed in past assaults on Abydos.

Senate sessions are frequently rowdy, so fun-loving citizens cluster on the steps to listen when the doors are open. The senate may vote to keep the hall doors open or shut, depending on how hot it is and whether or not the majority feels its policies are popular or upsetting to the masses. If a

very large crowd gathers, heralds may stand outside and echo the speeches to them.

In the wings on either side of the senate hall are suites of smaller offices, some occupied by the praetor and his personal secretaries, others by senior bureaucrats or reserved for private meetings between senators. The praetor's own office and one meeting room have a permanent Scrywall-18 cast upon them. There is also a library for city census and tax records. The rest of the bureaucracy work in dingy office buildings a few blocks away.

Hall of Justice

Adjacent to Kerberus House, this four-story building is the city's courthouse, currently presided over by magistrate Cyrus Black, whose cutting wit and wicked sense of irony are legendary. Up to 120 spectators may crowd into the courthouse to watch, although only a dozen are typically present unless the cases being tried are especially shocking or lewd.

Due to the use of magic to interrogate witnesses, trials finish in a few hours, unless rich or famous defendants are involved, in which case the advocates' desire for grandstanding will prolong the experience. A squad of skeleton guards and a Raven are at hand for security, with more added in important trials.

Behind the court is a set of stocks and a whipping post used for punishing minor offenders. Executions are held in the Arena.

LICH STREET

The shops and warehouses of the morticians, corpseflayers, and lich merchants, and their guildhalls are found here. The area smells of sawdust and decayed flesh.

Shop of Helga Mousakina, Master Mortician

Helga considers herself an artist. She and her six apprentices use makeup, careful stitching, and copious perfume to make dead bodies look and smell good. A typical job is \$100, or \$150 with scents.

Shop of Tom and Paul Malakes, Corpseflayer & Tanner

These brothers work together in the same shop. Paul, a tanner, discovered a niche market for goods made of human skin. He moved in with his brother Tom, a corpseflayer, who was willing to provide raw materials – after the zombie is flayed, its skin goes to Paul. Paul's customers are mainly student mages from the Society of Solomon wanting human skin grimoires or unique chair covers.

Samael's Court (Meat Market)

This plaza is dominated by a 12-yard-high column holding a winged statue of Samael, Angel of Death.

The meat market opens here every Tuesday and Friday. Lich merchants set up booths to buy, rent, and sell fresh corpses and zombies, both human and animal. Typically, only a dozen or so new human zombies or corpses are available unless a lot of people die suddenly, but there are always existing zombies and skeletons to be rented or sold, as well as undead horses, oxen, and dogs. After the market closes, rats and crows fight over the scraps of dead flesh in the plaza.

The highlight is a monthly auction where superior specimens are sold to the highest bidder. These include attractive zombie servants treated with preservatives, trained warriors, undead war horses, etc. Most buyers are gentry or upper commons looking for fine domestic servants, with exotics such as giants, dwarves or attractive female warrior zombies fetching high prices!

When the meat market is not open, Samael's Court is usually quiet, but some gentry and students like to use it for duels.

The House of Angerbod

This large house with attached warehouse is a block from Samael's Court. It is one of the oldest and largest lich merchant houses in the city, with a proud family tradition.

The House of Angerbod is best known for its quality zombie servants and well-preserved hunting animals and mounts. The current head is the old but fierce matriarch and necromancer Sylvia Angerbod, who is always trailed by a large zombie wolf.

Between meat market days, Sylvia Angerbod and her eight journeymen prepare and animate bodies and arrange corpse buying. Visitors who can't wait for market day or want to pay for a particular reanimation can visit on non-market days.

Half her employees are necromancers; the rest are clerks, morticians, and buyers. The warehouse holds a dozen prepared zombies, and a couple of fresh corpses. She pays street urchins to give her news of recent deaths so she can set up a purchase before other merchants. Nonetheless, Sylvia demands her employees be careful about where corpses come from: They should check with local priests to ensure whoever sells a body is its proper owner, and that it did not die from a communicable disease. The House keeps careful records of the names of all zombies her house created and who they were bought from and sold to.

The House of Angerbod prides itself on having the finest selection of zombies in Abydos. If a corpse is decomposed, or badly marked by whatever disease or injury killed it, they aren't interested. Her shop floors are carefully cleaned, and she employs a mage to use Purify Air, Insect Control, Clean, and Remove Contagion spells on new zombies.

Thanatos' House of Bestial Revenants

The grandfatherly old man running this small shop specializes in reanimating dead animals. Some of his customers are kids, who buy animated rats or cats that he creates using the Lesser Zombie spell (p. 27). Local children imitate the Bloodless Arena and have their own little leagues in which their dead pets fight one another for sport.

The House of Starkad Kolsson

This walled compound contains offices, a warehouse, and a courtyard. Starkad, his three sons and several employees (including a some corpseflayers) specialize in cheap skeleton laborers, but he also provides guards as well as gladiators for the Bloodless Arena. There's a small courtyard where Starkad's hired armsmen judge the potential skill of the zombies.

Starkad is less particular about where he gets his corpses than some merchants. If someone brought in "my poor brother, who died of a fever" (and somehow cut his own throat), Starkad's House pays for the corpse. During cold winter nights, Starkad hires desperate men to scour the streets for the corpses of frozen beggars. Who cares about a body is once its face has been flayed off?

Starkad probably has Naglfari connections and might even be a Hidden Jarl.

LOSTGATE ROAD

Lostgate Road gets its name from the former postern gate at the end of the street. The gate was bricked up in the 1500s for forgotten reasons, but the gate tower is still there. Today, the road is lined by the shops of old clothes merchants and poor tailors (the finer class of shops is on Kadia's Way).

Ragamuffin Scrag

One of the better used clothing stores, Ragamuffin Scrag offers articles as good as new but 25% off. The Widow Scrag, the owner, learned a number of Making and Breaking spells from her mother. Scrag buys damaged clothes, then magically repairs them. This keeps her expenses down, but it is illegal, because she has no mage's diploma. If it were discovered, she'd be fined by the Old-Clothes Sellers' Guild, and she might lose her shop. Scrag has another worry, though: Recently she's been shaken down for protection money – and it wasn't by Naglfari Northlanders. Are the Blood expanding their extortion operations?

Lostgate Tower

This gatehouse is like other city gates, except the gateway is bricked over, and the Medusa-head banner of the Eumenides Guild (p. 27) flies over the tower. The guild has a special charter from the city: They occupy Lostgate Tower rent free as long as they can defend it.

The hall boasts a guardroom, kitchen, armory, and infirmary. The upper floor is a dining hall hung with the colorful shields of the guild members. When a meeting or feast isn't taking place, the benches and tables are shoved against the wall, and the hall is used for weapons practice. Beneath the gatehouse is a storeroom and a dungeon, with cells for prisoners.

The gatehouse has its own cook and a dwarf butler, the unfazeable Master Dwalin (age 272). There are also 30 skeletal warriors, all elite soldiers (use Skeleton Knight statistics, p. 22), created from the remains of former Guild members. They have orders to defend the keep against intruders, but they act as servants during feasts and assist in weapons practice.

The Eumenides Guild holds meetings every two weeks, where the warriors can drink, share stories, and plan operations, as well as seasonal feasts. The meetings attract 2d members, feasts 4d; otherwise 1d warriors are about, eager for work.

ST. MAGDALENE'S ROAD

This busy street is the site of the complex of buildings of St. Magdalene's Church, Convent, and College. There are also a number of boarding houses, restaurants, and a tavern. Most college lectures are held in inn common rooms or masters' residences.

St. Magdalene's Church

This fine stone church is the center of the college. Many masters and students (as well as others from the neighborhood) attend services here. The church is famous for the deep crypts in which former masters of the college are traditionally interred and for the stone gargoyles that perch on it (the proctors, p. 25) and sometimes fly off in search of prey or to deliver messages.

Lazarus Hall

This hall houses the administrative offices of the college. It is mainly staffed by Magdalene nuns. Several magical laboratories underneath Lazarus Hall may be used by masters or, with permission, by senior students. One large chamber has a giant 10-yard-wide Pentagram; it is supposed to be used for circles of mages practicing potentially dangerous ceremonial magic, but it is often borrowed by the student societies as a dueling arena.

St. Magdalene's Convent

A handsome building of white stone, the convent is located behind the church. A walled garden containing numerous apple trees surrounds it. The Sisters who administer the college live and work here, and they run a school for novice nuns and other female students.

The convent houses 90 nuns. An attached wooden house is a dormitory for 50 novices and students. Half are supplicants, while the other half are young female college students, who may elect to stay in the convent provided they abide by its rules, such as strict curfew, evening prayer attendance, and ladylike behavior.

Nicasia House

Across the street from St. Magdalene's, this four-story stone building dates to the 16th century, when it was a townhouse owned by Lady Ravenjoy. A pair of stone gargoyles loom over the front entrance, and stained glass windows illuminate the interior.

The first floor contains a large collection of classical and theological works, while the upper floors house the college's notorious Flesh Library. Admittance to the Flesh Library is limited to masters of the college, Ravens, and students either accompanied by masters or bearing a signed and sealed letter of recommendation from one of them.

The head librarian is Dr. Sabelia (pp. 51-52). A staff of four graduate students and 12 animated skeletons assist her. Rumors suggest that the skeletons are the remains of people who returned flesh scrolls late or damaged.

ST. MARTHA'S ROAD

The pleasant aroma of baking bread attracts customers to St. Martha's Road. The entire length of the street is given over to bakeries, except for a wine seller and a parish church. All bread is regularly inspected by the baker's guild, and loaves bear the guild seal. As the bakeries close, crowds of beggars arrive to beg for unsold stale loaves or burnt crusts.

NORTHGATE STREET

Near the gatehouse on this main thoroughfare are the city stockyards, where animals are kept at night before being let out to pasture. The rest of Northgate is devoted to cheap housing, agricultural markets, and the occasional inn or tavern.

Abastor Square

The city's main farmer's market is located at the intersection of Northgate Street and Grendel Road. In the center of the square, a column topped with a flaring cap supports a bronze sculpture of a rearing horse. In Latin and English, an inscription reads:

*Abastor, my faithful Nightmare
May your hoofbeats continue to disturb their dreams*

It was erected by Lady Ravenjoy to commemorate the death of her favorite horse, although she still rode the horse for years afterward.

Abastor Square is crowded with farmers selling fruit and vegetables from carts and stalls, and housewives and servants making purchases. Every Wednesday afternoon in spring and summer, the square hosts a horse market (undead horses can be found at the meat market).

Northgate Tenements

On the east end, by poor families and students rent rooms in the many crowded tenement buildings. Most are in fair shape, but some are ruins. Three years ago, a student-mage lost control of an elemental, and a fire went out of control. Before the Ravens could intervene, 121 people were dead and a row of buildings were burnt-out shells. They are now home to rats and beggars. The main landlord, Donovan Hawk, has banned students from his housing (though other landlords still allow the young people stay), and he has been raising rents in his other tenements (on Grendel Road) to cover his rebuilding costs.

The School's End holiday in June is celebrated by a parade of dead schoolmasters from the crypts at St. Magdalene's, down Kadia's Way, out the gate, around the walls, and back. Student revels and reckless use of magic follow the parade.

Jack-in-Irons

This newly opened inn's sign is a giant in chains ridden by a dwarf. A 400-year-old merchant hall known as Diomedes House, it was gutted by a fire and then used as a storage warehouse for two centuries. It was recently bought and refurbished as an inn.

Innkeeper Jack "Beanstalk" Wisdom is a tall, thin, outwardly jolly fellow, so busy with his customers that he often forgets to eat. His 21 rooms are decent (\$10/night), and the common room is lively. Wisdom offers free food and drink to minstrels, so there is usually good music playing. His cook is a pretty dwarf named Freydis, and her deep-fried crayfish with mountain-style mushroom pie (\$2) are delectable. The place is naturally popular with local dwarves.

Jack brews his own fine ale (\$2), but regular customers notice he's drinking a bit too much himself, and his levity seems forced. Perhaps it was his wife's sudden illness; she has moved back to the fresher air of her parents' house in the countryside.

Unknown to the patrons, the reality is worse. In the six weeks since it opened, four tenants died in their beds, holes chewed in their faces and stomachs. The discovery of the first two bodies made Jack's wife flee to her mother's. The innkeeper sold the bodies to Starkad's (they were foreign travelers) and hired an exterminator, but Judd Verminsbane found no rats.

In fact, the house is haunted. During the desperate hours of the last siege of Abydos, the Diomedes family, who lived here, locked the children in the cellar for safekeeping before they and their servants went to fight on the walls. Unfortunately, a collapsing tower killed the family and servants, and the forgotten children slowly starved to death.

Now their hungry ghosts haunt the site. There is a 2 in 6 chance per week a random sleeper will be visited by two to four ghostly children, who materialize singing soft lullabies. Their tiny teeth rip small chunks of flesh from the victim. Treat them as skull-spirits, but with only half HP. There are eight ghosts; if one is destroyed in combat, it restores itself next week.

Getting rid of them for good requires finding the bones of the children (buried under the floor of the inn's wine cellar). In addition to the usual Necromantic spells, other ways to dispose of them include having a priest use an Exorcism skill on them or reburying the bones in consecrated ground.

OLD TEMPLE ROAD

The city's Jews live around here – visitors will see paper scrolls bearing Old Testament scriptures ("Mezuzah") fixed to each doorpost. Zombies and vampires are not welcome in this area; anyone accompanied by them is treated with cold hostility (-4 reaction).

A number of import/export merchant houses and moneylenders are here. Other shops serve the special needs of the community, such as a bookshop that specializes in Hebrew and Ladino works, plus a pair of kosher butchers on a nearby side street.

The House of Eleazar

This Jewish merchant house with an attached warehouse is owned by Elias ben Moshe de domo Eleazar. His many relatives staff it. A prosperous business, it specializes in importing spices and luxuries and exporting dwarf goods to and from

Megalos. They lend money, own a few ships, and keep in touch with the Jewish community in Quartedec. They would be an excellent contact for any Jewish or Jewish-connected characters in Megalos who wish to operate in Abydos.

The Temple Road Synagogue

The synagogue holds services twice daily. They are presided over by the vigorous Chief Rabbi Berachiya ben Simon ha-Kahane (known as "Rabbi Benedict" to gentiles). He is on good terms with Father Bardas of St. Lazarus. His assistant, young Rabbi Joseph ben Isaac, is a new immigrant, and he is shocked by both the strange ways of the city and the way the Jews here take it in stride.

Office of Magister Abraham ben Jacob

Abraham ben Jacob is a highly skilled physician (Diagnosis-17, Physician-17, and Surgery-15). Most of his patients are Jewish, but he will also see gentiles, and he visits patients at home.

He charges as much as Dr. Balsamon (p. 34), but he halves his rates for the needy poor and doubles them for wealthy gentiles. He's fond of ending any gentile's diagnosis with "... and stay away from the undead – they'll make you sick!"

OPAL LANE

Businesses include one upscale inn and many jeweler's shops. The latter's customers are often mages seeking material for Powerstones and magic items. Jewelers' shops are well protected by both guards and magical or mundane traps.

The Boneflower

This inn is a large three-story brick building with a sign of a skeletal hand holding a white rose. Lenore Lillinghast is the owner, a slim waif-like beauty with straight black hair and pale skin who dresses in black silk and wears a scarf around her neck. She has a distant but polite manner and a secret smile.

The Boneflower does not serve food, but offers an excellent chilled white wine (\$5). Its common room – with its silk tablecloths, elegant crystal goblets and lace napkins, and velvet curtained booths – are popular with upper commons and gentry. Sixteen smaller rooms are for rent (\$5/hour or \$25/night), elegantly furnished with feather beds, suggestive oil paintings, and scented candles.

However, the Boneflower is not known for its decor, but for its staff. Six waitresses work in the common room, and each private room also has its own maid. All are coldly beautiful zombies, their skin treated with the elixir of Preservation of the Dead to stay fresh. They wear elegant fashions from John of Kadia and slim silver collars with their names upon them.

Some visitors come to Lillinghast's solely to enjoy the cold pleasures of undead flesh. Lenore has no objections, but if her favorite "children" are damaged, she will sue. Lillinghast takes meticulous care of their appearances, spending hours grooming and perfuming them like dolls.

For security, the Boneflower has three zombie guards, who dress as waiters in formal clothing and carry short swords under their cloaks. They are handsome, and Lillinghast will lend one of them to a guest, should he or she prefer a male companion.

Lillinghast knows Zombie and Control Zombie-15. She shops regularly at the meat market, seeking fresh, pretty zombies to turn into her own servants. She will also, secretly, buy fresh corpses if they meet her requirements: She compensates the seller with double the going rate for Beautiful or Very Beautiful girls, and twice the rate (cumulative with these modifiers) for elves or half-elves, whether male or female.

Lillinghast does not pay protection to any of the Naglfari: She's too high class, and they respect that. The same is not true of the Blood of the Martyrs, however; she's received a few threats (mostly Petrine graffiti scrawled on her walls at night) suggesting she shut down her "obscene establishment" or face "divine punishment. Similarly, a couple of regular late night patrons have reported a sense that they were being followed. The Ravens have not taken this as seriously as she'd like, so Lillinghast is considering hiring an outside investigator to look into it.

SLAUGHTER ROW

People smell Slaughter Row even before they see it; piles of offal and swarms of flies are everywhere. The street is devoted to butchers and stockyards. It's busiest from morning to noon, as wives, maids, and restaurants do daily shopping. In the afternoon, leftover cuts are sold to sausage vendors and pie makers.

TANNERS' ROW

Shops devoted to curing hides and leatherwork are located on this street. In good weather, masters and apprentices can be found outdoors, scraping hair and flesh from the skins, softening the hides with pigeon or dog dung, and washing the leather in vats of hot water and acid. Because of the smell, many tanners do not live above their shops, but in nearby tenements.

Brand Arisson's Shop

This establishment is full of vats where hides are boiled to make the leather armor he sells. He's boiling as well: boiling mad! His brother Bersi, an oil merchant on Vat Road, was beaten up by Naglfari thugs after protection money. He might be eager to hire someone to settle accounts.

The Knackery

The Knackery is a slaughterhouse for old nags and donkeys. It buys them for 10% of original value.

VAT ROAD

Vat Road is lined by the shops of perfumers, oil makers, acid brewers, and alchemists. Some alchemist shops specialize in particular elixirs, but others are generalists. Due to the value of their

laboratories and their products, alchemist shops have undead or hired human guards.

Felicia Hill's Shop

Hill is an indifferent alchemist but a skilled businesswoman, mass producing only elixirs of Healing and Preservation of the Dead. Behind her large stone house are many sheds with dozens of bubbling vats. Seven journeymen work for her. No one lives in the sheds, due to the fumes, but she has six zombie guards. She pays protection to the Naglfari, but a series of unsolved thefts and sabotage have Hill wondering what good the protection money is.

Shop of Joshua Kane

Master Joshua "Half-Face" Kane is a badly scarred and reckless master alchemist. His face lights up in a twisted grin when he is asked to create something exotic; he leaves mundane work to his two apprentices. He once worked for Hill, but he resigned angrily after he wasn't allowed to do interesting work.

The last time anyone asked him for protection money, he had his flesh golem drown them in a vat of alchemical waste. Kane ignores the guild's restrictions on selling dangerous elixirs, but he asks for double payment in advance.

VENTURE STREET

The offices of the city's merchant guilds and houses are located here, as are some attractive townhouses at the east end of the street.

The House of Ghent

The wealthy Ghent family runs this complex of warehouses and residences. They specialize in exporting woolen cloth, wine, and silk and importing dwarven goods, Northland timber, and furs. They own weavers' shops on Verdandi road, two big warehouses at the docks, a block of tenements on Grendel Road, and a part-interest in a half-dozen merchant galleys. Tobias Ghent (p. 51) is the Merchants' Guild guildmaster.

House of Ogmund

Another powerful merchant house, the family of Ogmund has risen to prominence recently. They own no ships, preferring to rent cargo space with independent captains. Their specialty is trading manufactured goods and weapons to the Nomad Territories and importing furs and gems, but they have contacts beyond Abydos and its satellites, and they deal with a number of privateers to resell Megalan loot and slaves.



The head of the house is Master Ogmund Snorrison (pp. 54-55). The warehouse behind his home/office holds many valuables, some ordered on consignment by wealthy gentry who pay him to find certain things available only in foreign parts. This *could* explain the muscular zombie guards, or the dozen armed, rough fellows who hang around, smoking and picking their teeth with daggers. Or maybe this business is a front for a Naglfari headquarters . . .

Windspider Hill

The eastern half of Venture Street climbs up a mound called Windspider Hill. Its tree-shaded environs are pleasant, and several large townhouses can be found here, owned by rich merchants and wealthy gentry. Most houses have numerous living and dead servants and guards. The Ravens and Northern Guard regularly patrol this area and question people who look out of place. Addresses of interest include the following.

Kadia House: The townhouse of teenage heiress Megethia Andronica (pp. 53-54). She hosts large parties here for Abydos' young elite.

Gorice Hall: A fine old mansion with extensive grounds, recently purchased by senator Donovan Hawk (p. 49).

Windspider House: A rambling mansion with a small tower that once belonged to the Lady Raven, Destasia Laskarina. Her line died out a generation ago. It is now derelict and for sale for \$300,000. It is rumored to be haunted.

VERDANDI ROAD

Verdandi Road is dedicated to the shops of weavers and tailors, as well as the headquarters of their guilds.

Jon of Kadia's Shop

This tailor shop is the best place for elegant apparel. Master Jon, age 37, is fussy but skilled: He makes only upper-class clothing or noble dress. He visits inns to see the latest fashions of foreign travelers, and he gives someone who can provide such information a 10%-20% discount. If a well-dressed foreign adventurer in one of the city's better inns sees a fashionably clad man sizing him up, it may be Jon of Kadia (although misinterpretations of his intent are quite possible!). Jon is acquainted with many of the city's elite, and his friendship can open doors.

THE TWINS

In the center of the Old City are the Twins, two large hills of similar size and shape. Atop Jerusalem Hill is the great cathedral of St. Lazarus, while perched on Constantine Hill is the imposing Citadel of Birds and its keep, Ravensbeak Tower.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. LAZARUS

St. Lazarus is the spiritual center of the Lazarite faith and seat of the archbishop. The huge cross-shaped building covers most of Jerusalem Hill. It features a 40-yard-tall bell tower topped with a tall steeple. Six great dwarf-wrought bells echo through the city every three hours, marking the canonical hours of the Church. On a clear day, a lookout in the tower can see as far as the Styx; the bell's tolling has often signaled invasion or victory.

St. Lazarus was built on the ruins of the older Church of the Sacred Trinity that burned down during riots early in Ravenjoy's reign. The interior is beautiful and foreboding with stained glass windows showing scenes from the Renewed Testament and the life of St. Samuel Hood. On the high vaulted roof of the chapel is the famous painting *Lazarus Awakens*.

The cathedral has space for 1,200 worshippers inside. On holidays, another 4,000 worshippers pack the square outside.

The tithes of Abydos have made St. Lazarus as grand as possible. Painted icons, crosses, and gold incense holders are everywhere. The high altar is a thing of splendor. A gold and opal-encrusted Magelocked case beside it houses the original Renewed Testament, only removed by the archbishop himself for special readings on the high holy days of the Church.

Security is not neglected. The niches inside the main chapel hold the bones of senior clergy (animated as zombies); ranged behind the high altar are 30 skeletal knights, armed with swords and in full plate, the remains of former heroic praetors and Ravens. There are rumors of other magical traps and defenses as well.

Beneath St. Lazarus, extensive cellars burrow deep into Jerusalem Hill. There are hundreds of storerooms, vaults, monastic cells, and catacombs, many haunted by forgotten undead. There are countless secret passages, and some chambers have been sealed off or forgotten for centuries.

Adjacent to the cathedral are office buildings where 120 priests and monks manage the ecclesiastical bureaucracy. Duplicates of parish records from across the island, registries of baptisms and deaths, a list of all priests and monastics, and financial records to facilitate the collection of Church tithes can be found here. The Church treasury and important offices have undead guards along with permanent Fireproof spells, Magelocks, Nightingale floors, Scrywalls, and Teleport Shields.

On the third floor is the office of Father Bardas, the archbishop's secretary, who manages the church bureaucracy. The apartments of the archbishop are also on this level.

The cathedral is also home to the undead skeletons of deceased priests. A few dozen work as actual servants; hundreds more rest in the catacombs, awaiting the commands of the senior clergy. They might be called forth to protect the cathedral in a dire emergency, but they otherwise appear only at holidays like Easter. Then, in robes and sacred vestments, bearing wooden crosses, containers of smoking incense and sacred icons, the dead priests arise to join their living brethren for a solemn procession around the city.

THE CITADEL OF BIRDS

Towering above Constantine Hill, the citadel is the oldest part of Abydos. For over 400 years, it was the castle of the ruler of the city – first the barons and earls of Abydos, then the Lady Ravenjoy. Now it is the headquarters of the Ravens and the home of the Lady Raven, who is currently Gabrielle Boneshanks (pp. 47-48).

Four towers and a gatehouse overlook the citadel walls, which are 12 yards high. Within the walls is a courtyard and a larger central keep, Ravensbeak Tower.

The gate into the courtyard is normally open; Ravens are always coming and going. By day, the courtyard rings with the clash of arms and zap of spells of a half-dozen Ravens, as they practice bashing away at each other and several zombies. There is a granary, stables, a well, a smithy, a bakery, and a wooden barracks (containing a guard company of the Polished Bone). Even if Abydos fell, the Citadel of Birds is capable of holding out on its own.

Ravensbeak Tower

The central keep of the citadel, Ravensbeak Tower was built on the foundations of the older Tower of Abydos in 1590. It's 60 yards tall and 15 yards across at the base, but only six yards in diameter at its spire.

First Floor

A great hall with scattered benches and tables, this level is similar to the precinct room of a city police station. Every six hours, two dozen Ravens come on or off duty; between shifts, it is less crowded but never quiet. The duty tribune and a couple of captains meet with upset citizens come to seek justice, while other Ravens and skeleton guards arrive with prisoners or witnesses. Staircases go up to the next floor and down to the dungeons.

Second and Third Floors

Once servants' quarters, these are now used as interrogation rooms for witnesses. Each tribune has an office on one of these levels. The Lady Raven has a dining and conference room on the third floor; in one corner is a sand table, with nearby shelves holding hundreds of lead soldiers and many maps. These and higher floors are enchanted with Spell Shield-18.

Fourth Floor

This floor houses a guard room and a large office, the latter dominated by a huge black oak desk. The Lady Raven is often found here, along with a guard captain assigned as her orderly; two Raven Guards are on duty in the guardroom outside. Bookshelves hold works on law, strategy, falconry, and poetry. A door leads to a balcony that encircles the tower. Outside flutter a flock of 200 zombie crows (treat as 20 swarms of bats) that obey the Lady Raven – they'll carry messages or attack intruders landing on the balcony. Below the balcony are iron chains; Lady Ravenjoy would often suspend those she wished to chastise here, for the crows to peck at. The present Lady Raven is more merciful, but she occasionally resumes the custom for tradition's sake.

Fifth Floor

This is the Lady Raven's Chamber, now occupied by Gabrielle Boneshanks. It is decorated in black and purple with

fine furniture of northern ironwood. A wardrobe holds the black silk gowns she favors. A favorite ivory chair rests to one side of the room. A pair of cuffs dangles from the iron four-poster bed. As a zombie, Gabrielle no longer sleeps, but she uses the bed with those captives she takes as lovers.

Sixth Floor

This windowless room, the Chamber of Melting Souls, is painted black. On the ceiling are embedded hundreds of small diamonds that glitter like stars when a candle is lit. A chain with steel manacles hangs from the ceiling, and a small altar features a single candlestick. There is a permanent Pentagram on the floor to one side.

Those Ravenjoy wished to intimidate, like gentry who did not support her, were chained here in the dark. Ravenjoy would cast Soul Jar and bind their soul into the candle, or sometimes, its flame, then leave them to reconsider their cooperation as they contemplated its melting. She would return in a few hours, or not, as the mood took her. Those who cooperated might get their soul back or be bound into a diamond or a zombie crow. Some gems and crows may still contain souls . . .

Ravenjoy chained those she wished to intimidate in the Chamber of Melting Souls.

Dungeon

Beneath the tower is a block of cells, guarded by a squad of the Polished Bone. Two are drained of mana, for holding mages. There will be five to 30 prisoners in the cells, criminals awaiting trial. Stairs lead to the Silent Maze.

THE SILENT MAZE

The Silent Maze is the remains of an old private sewer system that was expanded by the efforts of many undead workers. A Raven and squad of skeleton guards deliver prisoners to the dungeon. A heavy door in the dungeon opens into a lightless corridor ending in two locked portcullis gates. Guards shove the naked prisoner into the corridor, lower the gate and leave. The outer portcullis is then raised. If the prisoner does not enter the maze, a small murder hole in the ceiling is used to pour boiling water upon him. After the corridor is empty, it is sealed again.

The entrance chamber is triangular with three passages radiating from it. There is rarely anyone waiting, as new arrivals are infrequent. Inmates are mutilated to remove their tongues, then sent in one at a time, with a day's wait between them. Most are unrepentant rapists, diabolists, and Petrine heretics. About one in six are women. On average, one to two people are condemned here every month. Most die inside a week or kill themselves. Some three to 18 people are alive in the tunnels at any given time.

Besides the inmates, the living inhabitants of the Maze include a few swarms of rats who attack weak, sleeping, or unconscious people, plus the occasional reek (mobile slime monsters); see *River Reeks* (p. 43).

The maze is quiet but not truly silent. There's a constant drip of water, louder near the few pools, mixed with the tiny pitter-patter of rat feet. Cautious footsteps can sometimes be heard. Every so often there are other noises: croaking, sobbing, panting, eating sounds, a wet smack of a fist or bone club, a strangled scream. Meat does not stay on bones long: Rats, reeks, and people are hungry.

The worst feature is the total darkness. Deep underground, denied the ability to either see or use speech, prisoners slowly grope their way about, or risk running into walls or falling into pits, reeks, or pools of water. It is very hard to tell a friend from a stranger, unless you can identify a face or body by touch – and few inmates will risk letting someone get that close.

The maze has its own geography. The *Bone Labyrinth* is the upper level. It is made of cut stone, with many corridors but no doors and few rooms. Scattered about are rat and human skeletons; the latter's bones make good clubs.

Three staircases and several five-yard-deep pits lead to the *Blind Caverns*. They are damp, rough-hewn rock with natural grottos where dripping water has formed sharp stalactites. Small eyeless fish inhabit shallow pools inhabited. Some tunnels have dirt floors; clumps of mushrooms grow there, some nourishing, others poisonous.

By foraging for mushrooms and trapping rats or fish, the use of Urban Survival skill can keep a prisoner alive. Use the foraging and trapping rules for Survival skill (on p. B427) rather than Urban Survival, except that a success finds only enough food for one person for one day (1d+1 days on a critical). New inmates have a -4 penalty, but this drops by one per

two days spent exploring. An inmate who sticks to one area and traps food rather than foraging has a -3 on their Urban Survival roll but less risk of running into other humans. As usual, failure inflicts 2d-4 injury on the character; this represents poisonous mushrooms, being chewed on by rats or reeks while asleep, eating diseased meat, falling into a pit, etc.

Inmates encounter 1d-2 prisoners each day, or 1d-4 if they stay in one place. These may be separate single encounters or gangs. Some inmates are loners, a few are helpful, while others are mad, rapists, or cannibals. Use Hearing and Stealth rolls to determine who notices whom first!

Escape from the maze is widely believed impossible, though a skilled adventurer could break *into* the maze to rescue someone. There are legends of secret doors in the Bone Labyrinth that connect to city sewers. Some inmates spend days tapping on walls, but while secret passages do exist, they seem to lead only to hidden rooms within the maze itself. Lady Ravenjoy used some of these cells long ago for secret necromantic "experiments." The demons she summoned are kept in Pentagrams – but in the dark, it's easy for a prisoner to blunder across a Pentagon border he can't see and into the clutches of a fiend from hell . . . if the Pentagon border is disrupted, such a monster may be freed, leading to a brief feeding frenzy as it hunts down inmates, followed by its starvation or escape. Create demons using the rules in *GURPS Magic*, or make up new ones. Some escaped demons have even elected to remain in Abydos and found niches within society. Two examples are Glittertooth (p. 56) and the Cat Fairy (p. 57).

THE RIVER CHARON

The Charon is 150 yards wide, and 20-40 yards deep. Any size vessel can navigate it from Lake Styx to Abydos, but tall ships cannot sail upriver past the city due to Charon Bridge. The river freezes over in midwinter, thawing in early spring. During late winter, it is solid enough for skating, which is a popular pastime enjoyed by residents of all ages. It is well stocked with fish.

CHARON BRIDGE

This stone bridge was built in 1670, replacing Charon's Ferry. It stands 10 yards above the water on eight piles. It is 160 yards long and 15 yards wide. The road is only a few yards across as businesses have been built on the bridge itself.

Judd Verminsbane's Shop

The services of Magister Judd Verminsbane, professional exterminator of rats, bats, roaches, reeks, and bugs, are retained by wealthy homes, merchants whose warehoused goods are threatened, and better inns. Judd's methods include Sense Life, Insect and Mammal Control, and Mass Daze spells, as well as traps, poisons, and pastilles. While usually successful, when faced with stubborn foes, his professional enthusiasm can overcome his sense of proportion. He has occasionally been sued by clients when he thought that the "the only way to be sure" was a cure worse than the disease.

He is a tall man with a dark sense of humor; he hopes he will someday find the lair of the wererat that slew his mentor, Abraham Ratbinder. Judd occasionally hires assistants for particularly messy jobs.

River Reeks

A local species of reek (mobile slime beasts; see *GURPS Banestorm*, p. 224) live in the muddy banks of the Charon. River reeks are like ordinary reeks but swim (Move 2) and climb stone walls (Move 1). At night, dozens of them ooze up the city walls and down into the streets seeking chunks of flesh fallen from zombies. They are mainly dangerous if someone trips over one in the dark, but if sleepers forget to bar their doors at night, a reek might crawl in and engulf them. Occasionally, a reek becomes trapped in a house, crawls up a drain pipe, etc., causing consternation and a frantic call for an exterminator to eradicate it.

River reeks, if boiled for a lengthy period of time, can make a tasty sauce, but the process is unpleasant and smelly enough that only a few specialists do so.

The Wolfskull

Built on Charon Bridge, the rooms of this two-story inn offer a view of the rivers for \$8/night. The inn and common room are popular with merchants and ships' officers. Innkeeper Knut Ketilsson cooks excellent river fish (\$3), catching them with a hook out the kitchen window. His wife, Katla Wereslayer, is also the official city dog catcher and a Eumenides Guild member responsible for several of the lycanthrope heads and rugs decorating the common room.

Shop of Aethera Chessman

Magister Aethera is a 35-year-old master mage who earns her living casting Protection and Warning spells for businesses and private individuals. A cool, elegant woman, she collects modern paintings. Aethera is extremely discrete with her clients. She knows most Protection and Warning spells (and prerequisites) at 15, with Mystic Mist, Teleport Shield, Scryguard, and Scrywall at level 20. She is the daughter of Thomas Chessman, proprietor of Infernal Devices (p. 35) on Hourglass Road.

GEBURA TOWN

Thriving Gebura-on-Charon is also called the "new city." Its walls are only 200 years old; before then, it was just docks, a slave market, and the arena.

THE DOCKS

All along the west riverside stretch the city docks and the wharves and warehouses of the lake trade. They are outside Gebura's walls, but nearby towers command the dockyard approaches.

Two to seven merchant ships dock here each day, along with a couple of war galleys, like the privateer *Boneshark* or the warship *Tarasque*. Shipwrights, carpenters, sailmakers, and boatbuilders busily work with saw, hammer, and pitch bucket, making repairs and building new vessels. At present, the huge new warship *Ravenclaw* is taking shape, paid for by the senate as an answer to a spate of new naval construction across the lake in Quartedec.

When the lake freezes, 20 ships may be port. On the cargo docks, barges and merchant galleys are loaded or unloaded. Sweating longshoremen shout orders at burly zombies, who shift stacks of cargo, moving them between vessels, dockside, and warehouses. There are bales of cloth, furs, and silk; sacks of raw wool or spices; barrels of salted mutton or wine; crates of dull iron ore or bright swords; and many other goods.

Further upstream are the fish wharves. Some fish are netted from bridge and riverbanks, but boats also go down to the Styx every morning, and the day's catch is unloaded in the afternoon.

ANCHOR STREET

The closest street to the wharf gate features many rope makers, barrel makers, sail makers, cheap taverns, boarding houses, tackle shops, cutlers (makers of knives), and pawnshops.

By the gate is Anchor Square, with a mounted anchor from a Megalan flagship. Behind the gate, a column was built for a popular stylite. It is now unoccupied. Below the structure, prostitutes openly solicit their customers, and thieves roll passed-out boatmen lying drunk against it.

Recently, the Blood have been shaking down boat builders and bargemen for protection money, which they use to support their cause. The Naglfari (and Ravens) don't like this, and there have been a few bloody scuffles between them.

The Mandrake's Thirst

Tosti Hordsson, a large Northlander and former corpse-flayer, runs this lively tavern. The customers are a rough lot: sailors, bargemen, journeymen corpseflayers, and a few Naglfari carls. The beer is cheap (\$1), and entertainment consists of rowdy sea-chanteys, inexpensive prostitutes, drunken brawls, and gambling.

Tosti's bouncer is a big (ST 17) zombie guard armed with a club and boathook (as a scythe). The owner pays protection money to the Naglfari; the tavern is a good place to make contacts with the gang. Upstairs in the Thirst is a reasonably clean tattoo parlor run by Hordsson's young wife, Eudasia, a skilled tattoo artist. She mostly works on sailors, but she once did a flesh scroll and knows how to get in or out of the Flesh Library.

Freyja's Cats

At the cleanest brothel on Anchor Street. Madam Groa Vigdisdotter employs a dozen pretty Northlander girls. Groa pays protection to the Naglfari; the bouncer is a carl.

The Bloodless Arena

This raised amphitheater can seat 2,000 people. Under it are several cells for gladiators. Ravenjoy abolished battles between living slave gladiators but soon added public executions and duels between the undead.

Games are held by the state on major festivals and holidays. Human and animal zombies fight, often between two different teams, the Bones and the Skins. The best are the Praetor's Games held on Ravenjoy's birthday (Ravensday): Each praetor competes to outdo the last. Imported exotica like undead elephants or centaurs are much in demand. Merchants (and monster hunters) have made small fortunes by procuring the reasonably intact corpses of rare and impressive creatures.

Living warriors who visit Abydos have a slight risk of being kidnapped and slain to fight in the arena; the Naglfari run a black market trade. The criminals also offer bets and odds for people who wish to gamble on the fights.

A bench seat is \$1, a front row \$20, with covered seats under the Praetor's Box presold for \$500. Peddlers pay a commission to the city to sell pastries, water, and beer. Intermissions feature theater, mimes, and the executions of condemned murderers by undead monsters.

BRIDGEGATE ROAD

This street begins at Charon Bridge. The businesses include fishmongers, a few seafood restaurants, and one teashop.

Yuki's Teashop

This new, friendly place serves herb teas and delicately sliced and flavored fish dishes. Yuki Bryne, its young half-Sahudese proprietor, is the daughter of a merchant captain and the Sahudese woman he brought back as a bride. Yuki has never been to Sahud, but her dead mother (whose kimono-clad skeleton now helps out at the shop) told her many tales of Sahud. Yuki is very respectful to her mother's skeleton. The young woman also speaks Sahudese.

Yuki's was recently adopted by slumming students from the Hecate Club as their hangout. It's a good place to meet young mages.

NORTHMEN'S BLOCK

This triangular plaza is now a vegetable market, but a slave market is still held here twice a month. Slaves are a mix of local debtors, criminals, and Megalans captured by privateers.

ST. SAMUEL'S STREET

The buildings here include glove, cloak, and hat merchants, and a major church.

Church of St. Samuel Hood

The biggest church in Gebura was built of white marble with the help of dwarven masons. (A small chapel devoted to St. Gilli is inside.) It can hold 600 worshippers. St. Samuel's is

the seat of the Bishop of Gebura. Thirty clergy reside here, including one dwarven priest, Father Thrand.

Tower of Faith

Adjoining St. Samuel's and physically connected to it by a walkway is the grim Tower of Faith, housing the Hand of Glory's city offices (run by 20 to 40 priests and monks), a court room, interrogation cells, and a force of 40 skeleton guards. At present, the cleric in charge of major investigations is the newly appointed Father Theophylactus, only 32 years old, a Lazarite priest who combines a strong faith with a honest idealism yet to be compromised by the reality of his job. His office has closer-than-usual cooperation with the Ravens, thanks to a cousin in the guard, although her requests for assistance often

seem to mean all hell has broken loose! Brother Demetrios the Icon Painter (pp. 50-51) may sometimes be found here at night.



ST. STEPHEN'S STREET

Here are shops and work yards of master stonemasons, roofers, and bricklayers, and the architecturally imposing Masons' Guild Hall. Its newly elected master is Master Robert Newton.

Seven dwarven artisans have shops here, notably Skifnir Sevenbeards, master mason, Earth mage, and ambassador to Thulin's Folk. Local dwarf masons are becoming annoyed that no dwarf has ever been elected to lead the Masons' Guild. Newton's supporters claim dwarves never take on human apprentices and keep their secrets to themselves.

The Masons' Guild Hall was built in 1720 on land that had originally held a chapterhouse of the Knights Templar. Some of the cellars and foundations are shared with the original. Maybe they share other secrets as well!

THE MONASTERY OF THE HOLY BLOOD

Seven miles from Abydos along the North Road is a wood filled with dead trees. After dusk, a traveling vampire-monk or two can sometimes be met on the road or in the forest. Sinners beware if he is thirsty!

The Monastery of the Holy Blood is a grim hilltop fortress. By day, no one answers; intruders will be attacked by zombie guards. At night a guest will be welcomed, but the monks are unhappy if disturbed without good reason.

Inside the monastery is a simple chapel, two dozen cells, and a library. Beneath the chapel are crypts with the vampire-monk's

coffins. The youngest monk is handsome Brother Demetrios the Icon Painter (pp. 50-51), who commutes between his crypt here and his office in the Tower of Faith (see above). The oldest, Abbot Nicodorus, is 412. On any given night, two-thirds are out seeking sinners to purify; the rest pray or study, fasting to mortify their spirits.

The monastery is guarded by 20 armored skeletal knights, former Megalan warriors who fell in battle against them. See p. 23 for further details on the Order of the Holy Blood.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARACTERS AND CAMPAIGNS

I need no memorial. This city is my tombstone. These people are my bones. Their faith is my immortality. Dance with the dead, and you need not fear the dark.

– Lady Nicasia Ravenjoy, *Collected Sayings*

The range of characters that live in Abydos and its environs and the kinds of encounters an adventuring party could have there are as varied as any large city.

CHARACTERS

Many of these NPCs are movers-and-shakers in the city. Others are possible patrons and allies. Some are potential enemies or villains.

ARCHBISHOP NARSES THE PIOUS

There have been many archbishops with longer life spans and greater necromantic power than Narses, but few have possessed such taste for intrigue. After an early career as an inquisitor in the Hand of Glory, Narses became the secretary of the last archbishop. Following his demise, he subtly maneuvered partisans of the two better-known candidates for the succession into a deadlock, then presented himself as a compromise acceptable to all.

Narses may be power hungry, but he is also a true believer who sees the Church of Lazarus and the City of Abydos as indivisible. In the years since he became archbishop, he has developed an extensive spy network in Megalos and beyond. He devotes his life to scheming to weaken the city's enemies at home and abroad. For example, last month, he learned two powerful Quartedec barons planned to end a generation-long feud by marrying their children. Not wanting to see Quartedec strengthened, Narses plans to order an agent to go to Megalos to spread rumors that the groom-to-be visits brothels in disguise. After these circulate, a pregnant whore is to be murdered, by a second agent, to make it look like someone was “hushing up” evidence of a bastard child. Hopefully, the scandal will scuttle the engagement and the barons will be at each other's throats again.

Narses has little respect for the current praetor, who he considers a fat fool. He finds the Lady Raven a bit unsubtle, but a useful tool to frighten the city's enemies. He wishes he was not so unnerved by her himself, and he sometimes fears she might start a war that Abydos is not ready for.

Archbishop Narses

236 points

Male, age 67, with black hair, gray eyes, and short beard.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 10 [0].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [10]; Per 13 [0];
FP 10 [0].
Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 9.
5'11"; 138 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Latin (Native) [6].

Advantages

Clerical Investment [5]; Contact Group (Abydos upper class; Skill-15; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [10]; Contact Group (Merchants who trade with Abydos; Skill-12; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5]; Contact Group (Quartedec upper class; Skill-12; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5]; Magery 2 [25]; Religious Rank 6 [30]; Smooth Operator 2 [30]; Status 3* [5]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10].

Archbishop Narses schemes to weaken Abydos' enemies no matter where his spy network finds them.

Disadvantages

Bad Sight (Nearsightedness) [-25]; Duty (To Lazarite Church and Abydos; Nonhazardous; 12 or less) [-5]; Fanaticism (Power of Abydos) [-15]; Insomniac (Mild) [-10]; No Sense of Humor [-10].

Quirks: Ascetic; Hums to himself; Likes Sahudese cooking; Secretive. [-4]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Current Affairs/TL3 (Politics) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Current Affairs/TL3 (Abydos and its neighbors) (E) IQ [1]-13; Detect Lies (H) Per-1 [2]-14†; Diplomacy (H) IQ+2 [8]-16†; Economics (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Forgery (H) IQ [4]-13; Law (Religious) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-14†; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-14; Politics (A) IQ [2]-15†; Public Speaking (A) IQ [2]-15†; Religious Ritual (Lazarite Christian) (H) IQ [4]-13; Staff (A) DX-1 [1]-9; Theology (Lazarite Christian) (H) IQ [4]-13.

Spells‡

Age (VH) IQ-1 [1]-12; Apportation (H) IQ [1]-13; Aura (H) IQ [1]-13; Banish (H) IQ [1]-13; Borrow Language (H) IQ [1]-13; Compel Truth (H) IQ [1]-13; Continual Light (H) IQ [1]-13; Control Zombie (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Counterspell (H) IQ [1]-13; Create Water (H) IQ [1]-13; Death Vision (H) IQ [1]-13; Deflect Missile (H) IQ [1]-13; Detect Magic (H) IQ [1]-13; Dispel Magic (H) IQ [1]-13; Divination (Dactylomancy) IQ [1]-13; Gift of Letters (VH) IQ [1]-12; Gift of Tongues (VH) IQ [1]-12; History (H) IQ [1]-13; Ignite Fire (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Energy (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Language (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Vitality (H) IQ [1]-13; Light (H) IQ [1]-13; Magelock (H) IQ [1]-13; Major Healing (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Mind-Reading (H) IQ [1]-13; Mind-Search (VH) IQ [1]-12; Mind-Sending (H) IQ [1]-13; Minor Healing (H) IQ [2]-14; Purify Air (H) IQ [1]-13; Purify Water (H) IQ [1]-13; Scryguard (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Scrywall (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Seek Earth (H) IQ [1]-13; Seeker (H) IQ [1]-13; Seek Water (H) IQ [1]-13; Sense Emotion (H) IQ [1]-13; Sense Foes (H) IQ [1]-13; Skull-Spirit (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Soul Jar (VH) IQ-1 [1]-12; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Steal Energy (H) IQ [1]-13; Steal Vitality (H) IQ [1]-13; Tell Time (H) IQ [1]-13; Trace (H) IQ [1]-13; Truthsayer (H) IQ [1]-13; Zombie (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Zombie Summoning (H) IQ [1]-13.

* Includes two levels from Religious Rank.

† Includes +2 from Smooth Operator.

‡ All spells include +2 for Magery.

LADY RAVEN

GABRIELLE BONESHANKS

Gabrielle Tzirithon, usually known as “Boneshanks,” has been the Lady Raven since the 1940s. Fierce, proud, direct, and impatient, she is a law unto herself and a terror to criminals and heretics. She always speaks her mind and never ignores an insult or forgets a friend. While not especially religious, she is a staunch defender of Abydos. She is famous for her daring raid that burned the Quartedec docks (“we should have razed the city!”) and for being dead.

While a Raven tribune, Gabrielle was killed in a magical battle with a Naglfari wizard. She had created a Soul Jar, but she hadn’t yet learned the Possession or Exchange Bodies

spells and so was unable to escape. Eager to get back into action, she had a friend cast a Zombie spell on her corpse, then a second Soul Jar spell to transfer her soul back into that zombie. Gabrielle then used her own Control Zombie spell to seize control of it. Since someone within a Soul Jar can communicate mentally with whatever they are in contact with, she can give orders to her zombie body.

Effectively, the Lady Raven is a zombie with free will. While she doesn’t consider it ideal, she hasn’t let it slow her down and has refused to retire.

Gabrielle uses a Simple Illusion Disguise at all times: Her zombie body is a burned, partly skeletal corpse. Her left leg is just bones, as is her right arm, though much of her torso and half her face is intact. She uses the Elixir of Elysium to prevent any further decay. Her epithet means “bony legs.”

She owns an estate in the countryside, but she lives in her Ravensbeak tower. She carries a broadsword (*very fine*, often with Icy Weapon on it) and wears her Raven’s cloak and uniform and a black opal brooch with a 32-point Powerstone.

New Template: Zombie Body

-25 points

A zombie body is a zombie that is used as a Soul Jar and further magically constrained (via Control Zombie) to obey the soul occupying it. It has the majority of physical elements of the Zombie template, but omits mental and social traits. The absence of mana will immediately shut down a zombie body.

Zombie Body includes ST+1 [10]; Appearance (Monstrous; Universal, +25%) [-25]; Bad Smell [-10]; Dependency (Mana; Very Common; Constantly) [-25]; Disturbing Voice [-10]; Doesn’t Breathe [20]; Doesn’t Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn’t Sleep [20]; Fragile (Unnatural) [-50]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood; Unliving) [25]; No-Mana Paralysis* [-20] No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5]; Temperature Tolerance 10 [10]; Unaging [15]; Unhealing (Total) [-30].

* Identical to Nocturnal (p. B146), except that effects apply in areas without mana, instead of daylight.

Gabrielle Boneshanks

411 points

Female with zombie body, age 96. Disguised as a beautiful woman with short black hair and piercing blue eyes.

ST 13 [20]; **DX** 14 [80]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 13 [30].

Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 13 [0].

Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0]; Dodge 11*; Parry 13*; Block 11*. 5’9”; 77 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Latin (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Ambidexterity [5]; Charisma 2 [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Magery 3 [35]; Military Rank 5 [25]; Status 5†‡ [10]; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

Disadvantages

Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Enemies (Nobles of Quartedec and Petrine Christian sympathizers; Hunter; 6 or less) [-15]; Lecherousness (12) [-15]; Reputation -3 (As evil lich; Christians in surrounding lands) [-5]; Sense of Duty (To Abydos) [-10]; Zombie Body [-50].

Quirks: Amateur poet; Arrogant; Cruel; Enjoys ice skating; Loyal to friends; Takes prisoners as lovers. [-5]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ [2]-14; Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Brawling (E) DX [1]-14; Broadsword (A) DX+1 [4]-15; Carousing (E) HT [1]-13; Cloak (A) DX+1 [4]-15; Current Affairs/TL3 (Abydos and its neighbors) (E) IQ [1]-14; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Falconry (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Fast-Draw (Sword) (E) DX [1]-15*; First Aid/TL3 (E) IQ [1]-14; Intelligence Analysis (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Knife (E) DX [1]-14; Law (Abydos) (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Leadership (A) IQ+2 [8]-18§; Navigation (Sea) [1]-13; Poetry (A) IQ [2]-14; Politics (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-13; Saber (A) DX+4 [16]-18; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-14; Seamanship [1]-14; Shiphandling/TL3 (Ship) (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Skating (H) HT-2 [1]-11; Soldier/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-14; Strategy (Land) (H) IQ [4]-14; Strategy (Naval) (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-14.

Spells¶

Armor (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Apportation (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Banish (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Control Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Counterspell (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Daze (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Death Vision (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Deflect Missile (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Delay (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Detect Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Dispel Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Evisceration (VH) IQ+1 [2]-15; Fear (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Flight (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Foolishness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Ghost Wind (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Hide Thoughts (H) IQ+2 [2]-16; Illusion Disguise (H) IQ [1]-15; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Lend Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Levitation (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Light (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Magelock (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Mass Zombie (VH) IQ+1 [2]-15; Minor Healing (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Mind Reading (H) IQ [1]-15; Mind-Search (VH) IQ [1]-14; Panic (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Reflect (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Reflex (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Sense Emotion (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Sense Foes [1]-15; Sense Life (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Sense Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Shield (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Simple Illusion (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Skull-Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Soul Jar (VH) IQ+1 [2]-15; Soul Rider (H) IQ [1]-15; Steal Energy (H) IQ [1]-15; Steal Vitality (H) IQ [1]-15; Steal Wisdom (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Teleport (VH) IQ [1]-14; Terror (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Truthsayer (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Turn Zombie (H) IQ+10 [32]-24; Ward (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Zombie Summoning (H) IQ+1 [1]-15.

* Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

† Includes one level from Wealth.

‡ Includes two levels from Military Rank.

§ Includes +2 from Charisma.

¶ All spells include +3 for Magery.

PRAETOR BASIL STEPHANOS

Stephanos is the elected leader of Abydos. A former gentleman privateer, he was famed for bloody (and lucrative) raids against Megalos. He is still known as “the Hellshark” after his pirate galley. He used his fame and fortune to enter the senate. After a distinguished career, he was elected praetor.

His main policies are low customs duties (he's supported by many merchants) and a stronger navy. This has also made him popular with those working in the shipping industry, but the short-term increase in property taxes to pay for the ships have made him unpopular with wealthy landowners, and he needs to fight hard to keep his vessels funded.

Although overly fond of fine food and drink, Stephanos is touchy about his increasing weight: Enemies sometimes mockingly refer to him as “the hell-whale.” If he finds out, he'll likely challenge them to a duel.

Stephanos is unmarried but has many suitors. He owns a house on Windspider Hill. Though not a mage, he has numerous magic items, including a *very fine* dancing bastard sword and a variety of protective amulets and talismans.

Praetor Basil Stephanos

264 points

Male, age 52, with black hair and brown eyes.

ST 13 [30]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 11 [10].

Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 14 [10]; Per 12 [0]; FP 11 [0].

Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 10*; Parry 11*; Block 11*.
5'9"; 258 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Latin (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Charisma 1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Common Sense [10]; Reputation +3 (As dashing privateer; In Abydos) [7]; Status 4† [15]; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Fat [-3]; Gluttony (12) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Abydos) [-5].

Quirks: Curses like a sailor; Loves hunting in the countryside; Mildly lecherous; Prefers big Northlander girls; Sensitive about his weight. [-5]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ [2]-12; Area Knowledge (Lake Styx) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Broadsword (A) DX+2 [8]-14; Carousing (E) HT+1 [2]-12; Current Affairs/TL3 (Politics) (E) IQ [1]-12; Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Falconry (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-14‡; Navigation (Sea) (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Politics (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-11; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-12; Seamanship/TL3 (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Sex Appeal (A) HT [2]-11; Shield (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Shiphandling/TL3 (Ship) (H) IQ

[4]-12; Spear (A) DX [2]-12; Strategy (Naval) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Tactics (H) IQ-1 [2]-11.

* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

† Includes one level from Wealth.

‡ Includes +1 from Charisma.

SENATOR DONOVAN HAWK

Donovan Hawk studied necromancy at St. Magdalene's, but after inheriting the family lich merchant business, he sold it to invest in real estate – he wanted a more respectable career. For the last decade, he's been the biggest slumlord in Abydos. He used his money to get a prominent wife and a seat in the senate. He has ambitions of becoming praetor.

Donovan's wife is Camilla Rossatina, a lovely 17-year-old baronet's daughter. The marriage gave him an aristocratic trophy wife and Camilla's father a lot of money, but Donovan wasn't the man Camilla had hoped he'd be. Donovan's household was also boring: He had no human servants, only undead ones and a pack of hounds.

Donovan's secret: After two years of being treated as a fashion accessory, the love-starved Camilla had an affair with a poor but charming law student she met at a book shop. Donovan noticed a change in her behavior and forced a confession out of her. He could have divorced her, but the scandal would have damaged his career. Instead, he used a Soul Jar spell to catch her soul in the body of a dog; then he strangled her human form.

Her soul is now trapped in a wolfhound bitch he named Fidelity. Camilla can see out the dog's eyes, but she cannot control the dog. Donovan sometimes takes Fidelity on walks in public. He is careful not to let anyone but him pet the dog – if so, Camilla could communicate with them. It's a risk, but a slight one: The huge dog growls and snaps viciously at everyone, and few strangers would risk losing a finger. He finds Camilla's mute suffering within her canine prison too delicious to give up.

To keep the Ravens from investigating, Donovan has animated her corpse, and uses an Elixir of Preservation of the Dead. His wife doesn't appear in public, but he allows occasional visitors to glimpse her.

As for the law student, Donovan used a skull-spirit to kill the boy in his sleep. He never knew how or why he died, and the crime remains unsolved. Because the boy was poor, his body was sold in the meat market. Donovan arranged to purchase it, but he did not have it animated. Instead he fed the corpse to his dogs.

Donovan owns a big house with many servants. He wears black and white clothing, walks a dog, and carries a sword-cane (a rapier).

Donovan Hawk

195 points

Male, Age 49. Blond, wispy hair, sad blue eyes.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 12 [20].

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0];

FP 12 [0].

Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 9.

5'8"; 140 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Latin (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Magery 2 [25]; Status 2* [5]; Wealth (Very Wealthy) [30].

Disadvantages

Greed (12) [-15]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Secret (Murdered his wife; Possible Death) [-30].

Quirks: Breeds fierce dogs; Quietly vengeful; Smokes heavily; Status-conscious. [-4]

Skills

Animal Handling (Dogs) (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Interrogation (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Law (Abydos) (H) IQ [4]-14; Merchant (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Politics (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Rapier (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-11; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ+1 [2]-15.

Spells†

Beast Link (H) IQ [1]-14; Beast-Soother (H) IQ [1]-14; Beast Summoning (H) IQ [1]-14; Death Vision (H) IQ [1]-14; Hide Emotion (H) IQ+1 [2]-15; Hide Thoughts (H) IQ+1 [2]-15; Lend Energy (H) IQ [1]-14; Lend Vitality (H) IQ [1]-14; Master (H) IQ [1]-14; Minor Healing (H) IQ [1]-14; Persuasion (H) IQ+1 [2]-15; Sense Emotion (H) IQ [1]-14; Sense Foes (H) IQ [1]-14; Sense Life (H) IQ [1]-14; Sense Spirit (H) IQ [1]-14; Skull-Spirit (H) IQ [1]-14; Soul Jar (VH) IQ-1 [1]-13; Steal Energy (H) IQ [1]-14; Steal Vitality (H) IQ [1]-14; Summon Spirit (H) IQ [1]-14; Test Food (H) IQ [1]-14; Truthsayer (H) IQ [1]-14; Ward (H) IQ+1 [2]-15; Zombie (H) IQ [1]-14.

* Includes one level from Wealth.

† All spells include +2 for Magery.

The other Ravens fear Anastasia.

RAVEN CAPTAIN ANASTASIA PSILENA

This young Raven is a dedicated officer with an excellent arrest record and a friendly personality. But her fellow Ravens avoid her like the plague, and the Lady Raven punishes guards who foul up or disobey orders by assigning them to Anastasia's squad.

Anastasia was born in Abydos to merchant parents. Her mother died in childbirth. When she was 13, she sailed with her father on a trip to the Ravensmarch and back, only to have a storm smash his ship into the rocks. She was the sole survivor. Her cousin, a Lazarite priest, noticed her magical aptitude and soon packed her off to St. Magdalene's College, where she joined the Hecate Club. But one night, a roommate's Cook spell backfired, and a major demon crawled out of the stew pot. Luckily, Anastasia had just learned the Banish spell the day before and dispelled it, though not before her friend was devoured.

After a few similar incidents, Anastasia's teachers convinced her that she would make a better Raven than master mage. She quit school to join the guard. A brave and diligent officer, she has helped catch several wanted criminals, including former Blood leader Luke Hook. Sadly, her first two partners have been killed, and the third was crippled in the line of duty . . .

Anastasia does her best to stay cheerful and happy. By nature optimistic, she is sure that if she does the right thing, everything will work out in the end.

Anastasia Psilena

344 points

Female, age 33. Blue eyes, black hair.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 14 [80]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 12 [20].

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 14 [5]; Per 14 [5]; FP 12 [0].

Basic Speed 6.50; Basic Move 6; Dodge 3; Parry 11; Block 10.
5'6"; 110 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Ally (Father Theophylactus*; Built on 50%; 9 or less) [2]; Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Contact Group (Hecate Club members; Skill 15; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [10]; Intuition [15]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Luck (Defensive, -20%) [12]; Magery 2 [25]; Military Rank 3 [15]; Serendipity 3 (Coincidences cannot be beneficial to others in any way, just her, -20%†) [36]; Status 1 [0]‡; Wealth (Comfortable) [5].

Perks: Deep Sleeper; No Hangover. [2]

Disadvantages

Duty (Ravens; 9 or less) [-5]; Enemy (Blood of the Martyrs; Hunter; 6 or less) [-5]; Honesty (12) [-10]; Reputation -2 (Gets partners killed or into trouble; Among Ravens) [-3]; Vow (Uphold the city's laws, obey their officers, and protect Abydos) [-10].

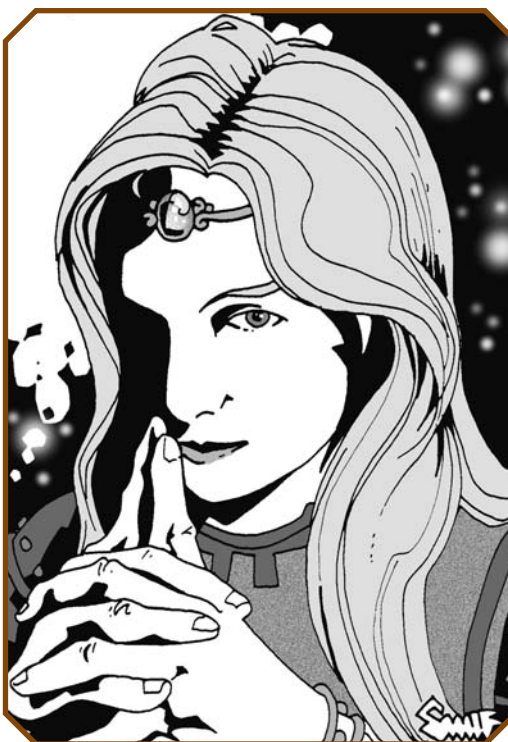
Quirks: Cheerful; Idealistic; Thinks she can cook; Collects zombie cats. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Broadsword (A) DX+2 [8]-16; Cloak (A) DX [2]-14; Criminology/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-13; Fast-Draw (Sword) (E) DX [1]-14; Intelligence Analysis/TL3 (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Law (Abydos) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Research/TL3 (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-13; Streetwise (A) IQ [2]-13.

Spells§

Animation (VH) IQ-1 [2]-13; Apportation (H) IQ [1]-13; Armor (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Aura (H) IQ [1]-13; Awaken (H) IQ



[1]-13; Banish (H) IQ [1]-13; Control Zombie (H) IQ [1]-13; Counterspell (H) IQ [1]-13; Daze (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Death Vision (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Deflect Missile (H) IQ [1]-13; Detect Magic (H) IQ [1]-13; Extinguish Fire (H) IQ [1]-13; Fear (H) IQ [1]-13; Foolishness (H) IQ [1]-13; Forgetfulness (H) IQ [1]-13; Ignite Fire (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Energy (H) [1]-13; Lend Vitality (H) IQ [1]-13; Levitation (H) IQ [1]-13; Light (H) IQ [1]-13; Minor Healing (H) IQ [1]-13; Seek Air (H) IQ [1]-13; Seek Earth (H) IQ [1]-13; Seek Fire (H) [1]-13; Seek Water (H) [1]-13; Seeker IQ [1]-13; Sense Emotions (H) IQ [1]-13; Sense Foes (H) IQ [1]-13; Sense Spirit (H) IQ [1]-13; Shield (H) IQ [1]-13; Simple Illusion (H) IQ [1]-13; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Test Food (H) IQ [1]-13;

Trace (H) IQ [1]-13; Turn Spirit (H) IQ [1]-13; Turn Zombie (H) IQ+1 [2]-14; Umbrella (H) [1]-13; Ward (H) IQ [1]-13; Zombie (H) IQ [1]-13.

* Her cousin, a senior inquisitor in the Hand of Glory; see *Tower of Faith* (p. 45).

† This limitation also means Anastasia cannot benefit from any coincidence that would *help* her comrades. Suppose she and a partner find a ladder to escape from a pit. She might climb up, but the ladder would break when her comrade followed her. Or, if her friend tried to go up first, it would break right away, and they'd both be out of luck!

‡ Status 1 free with Military Rank.

§ Includes +2 for Magery.

BROTHER DEMETRIOS THE ICON PAINTER

Originally a young painter from Cardiel, Andre Bouchard was transformed by a capricious lady vampire who collected handsome artists. After his vampire master was staked, Andre endured decades of hiding, shameful feeding, running from mobs, and trying to paint by candlelight. Eventually he found his way to Abydos. Discovering vampires were welcomed with an honored place in this Church, he embraced the Lazarite faith and took his vows as a Deathless Monk, choosing the name Brother Demetrios.

Demetrios believes the Lazarite Church saved his soul and that it is his duty to save others. His unwavering faith caught the attention of his superiors, and five years ago, he became an inquisitor of the Hand of Glory. His fanatic devotion to his adopted Church combined with the ruthlessness and deception he learned as a hunted vampire make him an excellent inquisitor. Although not a mage, his drive, coupled with his vampiric powers, make him one of the most feared agents of the Hand of Glory.

Brother Demetrios

328 points

Male; age 60 (looks 24). Black hair (wears a wig when disguised to cover monk's tonsure), golden eyes.

ST 19 [20]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 13 [30].

Damage 2d-1/3d+1; BL 72 lbs.; HP 23 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 17 [0]; FP 13 [0].

Basic Speed 6.5 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 10. 5'10"; 142 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Christian regions [0]; Abydos [1].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Accented) [4]; Latin (Native) [6].

Advantages

Appearance (Very Handsome) [16]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Patron (Order of the Holy Blood; 6 or less) [8]; Religious Rank 1 [5]; Vampire (*GURPS Banestorm*, p. 201) [100].

Disadvantages

Duty (Hand of Glory; 12 or less) [-10]; Intolerance (Petrine Christians) [-5]; Reputation -3 (Feared inquisitor; Petrine Christians and pagans in Abydos) [-5]; Vows (Obedience, Poverty) [-10].

Quirks: Enjoys making female heretics fall in love with him to get them to betray their faith, then drinking their blood; Loves prowling the city at night in disguise; Spends free time painting beautiful icons. [-3]

Skills

Acting (A) IQ [2]-13; Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Artist (Painting) (H) IQ+1 [8]-14; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Broadsword (A) DX [4]-14; Detect Lies (H) Per [2]-16; Disguise/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-13; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-14; Law (Religious) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Religious Ritual (Lazarite) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Sex Appeal (A) HT-1 [1]-12; Shadowing (A) IQ [2]-13; Stealth (A) DX [2]-13; Theology (Lazarite) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11.

GUILDMASTER TOBIAS GHENT

Tobias is the serving Guildmaster of the Merchants' Guild and the head of the wealthy merchant house of Ghent. He is a skilled businessman who (with his wife, Martha) rules his large family with an iron hand. His son, Justin, will inherit the business; he now serves as captain of a merchant ship while his wife stays at home. He is trying to marry his twin daughters, Agnes and Mary, to rich gentry (although Mary wants to become a lawyer). The black sheep of the family is grandson Tristan, a lecherous student-necromancer who is currently a leader of the Society of Solomon. Master Ghent has spent a lot of blood and gold to ensure the family name remains free of Tristan's scandals. He does not punish the boy too much; he remembers the follies of his own youth.

While still a merchant ship captain working for his own father (17 years ago), Ghent fell in love with a young and beautiful weaver's daughter named Eleanor Locke. She was secretly a Petrine Christian, and she persuaded him to help smuggle some relatives out of the city to Megalos. Ghent planned to join her, but he had second thoughts and remained in Abydos. Later, he learned that at least one of the "relatives" he had smuggled out with her was a wanted Blood terrorist.

Ghent returned to the Lazarite faith and later happily married. He considers his acts youthful folly best forgotten. But last week he caught sight of a woman who looked like Locke at the docks in Gebura Town. He lost sight of her in a crowd, but he is shocked. Is she here to see him, or working for the Blood? Will she try and blackmail him into helping her? Is it really her? Ghent is thinking of hiring a trustworthy person to investigate – without telling them why, of course.

Tobias Ghent

115 points

Male, age 47. Gray hair, brown eyes.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 10 [0].

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 14 [5]; Per 13 [0]; FP 10 [0].

Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 8. 5'6"; 145 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0]; Christian regions [1]; Nomad Lands [1].

Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Business Acumen 1 [10]; Status 1 [0]*; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

Disadvantages

Dependents (Son, two daughters; Built on 50%; Loved Ones; 9 or less) [-20]; Secret (Ex-Petrine; Possible Death) [-30].

Quirks: Collects necromantic toys and curios; Congenial; Distrusts priests. [-3]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ+2 [8]-16†; Current Affairs/TL3 (Business) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-14; Merchant (A) IQ+2 [8]-16†; Politics (A) IQ [2]-13; Seamanship/TL3 (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Shortsword (A) DX [2]-10; Smuggling (A) IQ-1 [1]-12.

* Status 1 free with Wealth.

† Includes +1 for Business Acumen.

DOCTOR SABELIA, THE HEAD LIBRARIAN

Sabelia has been the head librarian of St. Magdalene's College since 1877. A Magdalene nun, she has devoted her entire life to magical research. Her necromantic skills are typical of clergy holding the most senior ranks of the Lazarite Church.

She divides her time between administering the library, teaching a circle of students, and performing necromantic research. As head librarian, she is responsible for the protection of Nicasia Hall and its contents, the creation and maintenance of the flesh scrolls, and testing and recording all new spells developed by the college. She is not especially pious, but she is devoted to her position, utterly ruthless in the name of magical science, and enamored with strange necromantic experiments.

Sabelia may become a mentor and patron to any students interested in magical theory and necromantic spell design. She does not like Magister Blake (see below), who she considers a sloppy theorist as well as ill-mannered, and she warns her students about him. Some of her students have been harassed by Blake's students, but she is confident in the ability of anyone she teaches to defend themselves.

She extends her life through Steal Youth spells cast on slaves and those she catches trying to steal library materials. Her personal possessions include a jeweled cross with a 13-point Powerstone (with the quirk that it only recharges within Flesh Library). She holds her soul in a well-hidden Soul Jar. Her only weapon is a large silver knife enchanted with Accuracy+2 and Puissance+2.

Doctor Sabelia

344 points

Age 166 (looks 30) with short blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 16 [120]; **HT** 11 [10].

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 16 [0]; Per 18 [10]; FP 11 [0].

Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 7. 5'7"; 107 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Arabic (Accented) [4]; Greek (Native) [6]; Latin (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Magery 3 [35]; Religious Rank 2 [10]; Reputation +3 (Powerful necromancer; Mages in Abydos) [5]; Status 2* [5].

Disadvantages

Sense of Duty (To Flesh Library) [-5]; Vow (Chastity) [-5]; Vow (Poverty) [-5]; Workaholic [-5].

Quirks: Amoral scientist; Dreams she is a cat; Not seriously religious (despite being a nun); Obsession (Learn all there is know about necromancy). [-4]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ [2]-16; Artist (Sculpting) (H) IQ [2]-15; Artist (Tattoo) (H) IQ [2]-15; Cooking (A) IQ-1 [1]-15; First Aid/TL3 (E) IQ [1]-16; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-15; Literature (H) IQ-2 [1]-14; Mathematics/TL3 (Statistics) (H) IQ-2 [1]-14; Occultism (A) IQ+1 [4]-17; Research/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-16; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-16; Surgery/TL3 (VH) IQ-1 [4]-15; Teaching (A) IQ [2]-16; Thaumatology (VH) IQ+5 [16]-21†; Theology (H) IQ-1 [1]-15.

Spells†

Affect Spirits (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Age (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Analyze Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Ancient History (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Animation (VH) IQ [1]-16; Apportation (H) IQ [1]-17; Aura (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Awaken (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Banish (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Control Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Counterspell (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Cure Disease (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Daze (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Death Vision (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Decay (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Deflect Missile (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Detect Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Enchant (VH) IQ [1]-16; Encrypt (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Evisceration (VH) IQ [1]-16; Extinguish Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; False Resurrection (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Fear (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Foolishness (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Golem (VH) IQ [1]-16; Halt Aging (VH) IQ [1]-16; History (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Hush (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Identify Spell (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Ignite Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Lend Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Lesser Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Light (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Magic Resistance (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Materialize (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Minor Healing (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Pentagram (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Pestilence (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Powerstone (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Purify Water (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Reconstruct Spell (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Recover Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Relieve Sickness (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Repel Spirits (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Scroll (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Scryguard (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Seek Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Seek Earth (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Seeker (H) IQ+2 [4]-19; Seek Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Seek Water (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Sense Emotion (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Sense Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Shape Earth (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Shield (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Sickness (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Silence (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Simple Illusion (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Sleep (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Skull-Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Solidify (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Soul Jar (VH) IQ+1 [2]-17; Sound (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Steal Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Steal Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Spell Shield (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Steal Youth (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Stop Bleeding (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Summon Shade (VH) IQ [1]-16; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Suspended Animation (H) IQ+4 [8]-20; Test Food (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Trace (H) IQ+2 [2]-18; Turn Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Turn Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-17; Vigil (VH) IQ [1]-16; Ward (H) IQ+2 [1]-18; Youth (VH) IQ [1]-16; Zombie (H) IQ+4 [8]-20.

* Includes one level from Religious Rank.

† All spells and Thaumatology skill include +3 for Magery.

MASTER PROSPECTUS BLAKE

Blake is a master of St. Magdalene's College. He currently teaches two dozen students. A skilled enchanter, he spends a lot of time working with circles of mages to create various items for sale to wealthy clients. He is strongly religious, albeit in a scientific fashion. He enjoys summoning the spirits of dead Lazarite priests, saints, and mages to ask them difficult philosophical and theological questions, to better understand the strange and sometimes contradictory glory of God.

Blake has a tendency to get involved with his female students. Years ago, one of his favorites, a student fire mage named Irene Tsaphina, was practicing a Flame Jet spell when she had a magical backfire and accidentally toasted a flesh scroll that Blake was using for reference. Head Librarian Sabelia forced Irene to take the burned scroll's place in the library. Blake has hated Sabelia ever since, and he encourages his circle of students to do the same. He suspects Sabelia deliberately taunts him by ensuring certain scrolls are "on loan" when he needs

them. He has been trying to borrow Irene (who now has the formula for Control Fire Elemental tattooed upon her) for 60 years.

Blake and his most trusted students are secretly working to develop spells to summon angels, using variations of Planar Summons. He hopes to eventually conjure the very angel that showed St. Samuel Hood where to find the Renewed Testament. He has full confidence in his work, but if the Lazarite faith is a lie, he may end up developing a glorified demon-summoning spell that calls forth a cunning creature that pretends to be an angel. It is likely that the Hand of Glory would not approve, regardless of the outcome.

Prospectus Blake

280 points

Male; age 65 (looks 40). Brown hair and eyes, short beard.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 15 [100]; **HT** 11 [10].

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0]; FP 11 [0].

Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 7. 5'9"; 176 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0]; Christian regions [1].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Latin (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Magery 3 [35]; Status 1 [5]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10].

Disadvantages

Lecherousness (15) [-7]; Overweight [-1]; Secret (Angel research; Serious Embarrassment) [-5].

Quirks: Collects stuffed owls; Devout Lazarite; Likes to covertly use Itch, Measurement, Tickle, and Touch spells on objects of his lechery; Messy dresser. [-4]

Skills

Carousing (E) HT [1]-11; Knife (E) DX [1]-11; Mathematics (Pure) (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Occultism (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Philosophy (Aristotelian) (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Research/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-15; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-15; Teaching (A) IQ [2]-15; Thaumatology (VH) IQ+1 [2]-16* ; Theology (Lazarite) (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Writing (A) IQ-1 [1]-14.

Spells*

Age (VH) IQ [1]-15; Amulet (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Analyze Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Apportation (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Banish (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Body-Reading (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Command Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Continual Light (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Cook (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Counterspell (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Create Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Dancing Object (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Death Vision (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Detect Magic (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Divination (Crystal Gazing) (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Earth to Stone (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Earth Vision (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Enchant (VH) IQ+2 [4]-17; Entombment (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Fear (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Flesh to Stone (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Fortify (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Ghost Weapon (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Halt Aging (VH) IQ [1]-15; History (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Identify Spell (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Ignite Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Itch (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Lend Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Light (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Lighten

(H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Lighten Burden (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Limit (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Magelock (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Materialize (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Measurement (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Minor Healing (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Name (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Neutralize Poison (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Planar Summons (Unknown plane, which *he* believes is Heaven) (H) IQ+2 [2]-17; Power (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Powerstone (H) IQ+2 [2]-17; Puissance (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Purify Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Recover Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Relieve Sickness (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Scryguard (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Scrywall (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Season (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Seek Earth (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Seeker (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Seek Water (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Emotion (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Foes (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Life (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Shape Earth (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Share Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Simple Illusion (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Solidify (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Spasm (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Steal Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Steal Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Steal Youth (VH) IQ [1]-15; Stop Bleeding (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+3 [4]-18; Talisman (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Temporary Enchantment (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Test Food (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Tickle (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Touch (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Trace (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Turn Spirit (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Ward (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Weapon Spirit (VH) IQ [1]-15; Youth (VH) IQ [1]-15; Zombie (H) IQ+1 [1]-16.

* All spells and Thaumatology skill include +3 for Magery.

*Megethia Andronica, the Rose
Society president, loves finery,
fighting, and flaunting her wealth.*

MEGETHIA ANDRONICA

Megethia is a rich and somewhat spoiled heiress, a potent necromancer, and the current president of the Rose Society. She has a habit of seducing masters and upper-year students in exchange for private magic lessons. Megethia is one of the worst bullies, but if she takes a liking to someone, she can be a useful friend and ally.

Although preferring to rely on minions, she is a skilled duelist. She happily defends her honor with blade or spells against opponents.

A material girl, Megethia's possessions include the latest fashions, as well as a 10-point Powerstone (Shatterproof opal; replaces one tooth lost in a fight), a rapier (fine quality, named Bloodrazor and coated with Elixir of Sleep ointment), a large knife (fine quality, with caustic tar on the blade), and a zombie guard-servant.

Megethia Andronica

258 points

Female student, age 19; curly black hair, big brown eyes.

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 11 [10].

Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 11 [0].

Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 10. 5'3"; 97 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Latin (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Allies (Rose Society hangers-on; 50% of point total; 6-10 members; 12 or less) [24]; Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Fashion Sense [5]; Fit [5]; Magery 2 [25]; Status 3* [10]; Wealth (Wealthy) [20].

Disadvantages

Bully (12) [-10]; Enemies (Hecate Club; Rival; 6 or less) [-5]; Jealousy [-10].

Quirks: Buys latest fashions; Insults lower-class students; Likes to test poisons and elixirs on small animals and ex-boyfriends; Loves lavish parties; Wears undead baby mice as earrings. [-5]

Skills

Alchemy/TL3 (VH) [4]-12; Cooking (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Current Affairs/TL3 (Popular Culture) (E) IQ [1]-13; Dancing (A) DX [2]-13; Literature (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Main-Gauche (A) DX [2]-13; Poisons/TL3 (H) IQ [4]-13; Public Speaking (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Rapier (A) DX+2 [8]-15; Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [2]-14; Sex Appeal (A) HT+1 [4]-13†; Skating (H) HT-2 [1]-9; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-1 [1]-12‡.

Spells‡

Apportation (H) IQ [1]-13; Choke (H) IQ [1]-13; Clumsiness (H) IQ [1]-13; Deathtouch (H) IQ [1]-13; Death Vision (H) IQ [1]-13; Enchant (VH) IQ-1 [1]-12; Find Direction (H) IQ [1]-13; Grace (H) IQ+2 [4]-15; Hair Growth (H) IQ [1]-13; Hinder (H) IQ [1]-13; Ignite Fire (H) IQ [1]-13; Itch (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Energy (H) IQ [1]-13; Lend Vitality (H) IQ [1]-13; Lesser Zombie (H) IQ [1]-13; Light (H) IQ [1]-13; Missile Shield (H) IQ [1]-13; Pain (H) IQ [1]-13; Paralyze Limb (H) IQ [1]-13; Rooted Feet (H) IQ [1]-13; Seek Plant (H) IQ [1]-13; Shield (H) IQ [4]-15; Skull-Spirit (H) IQ [1]-13; Spasm (H) IQ [1]-13; Strike Dumb (H) IQ [1]-13; Summon Demon (H) IQ [1]-13; Summon Spirit (H) IQ [1]-13; Tanglefoot (H) IQ [1]-13; Test Food (H) IQ [1]-13; Ward (H) IQ [1]-13; Wither Limb (H) IQ [1]-13; Zombie (H) IQ [1]-13.

* Includes one level from Wealth.

† Includes +1 from Appearance.

‡ All spells and Thaumatology skill include +2 from Magery.

EDWARD HOOK

Edward's father worked as a fisherman but was secretly a Petrine deacon. When Edward was nine, Brother Demetrios of the Hand of Glory arrested his parents. Edward and his brother, Luke, escaped, and hid with a Roofrat gang. Edward never forgot the disgusting sight of the vampire-monk drinking his mother's blood, urging her to "confess her sins," a look of sinful pleasure on his face. When they grew up, he and Luke gathered other "true Christian lads" and restarted Blood of the Martyrs.

After some early successes, Luke was caught by the Ravens. Knowing that no one could resist the Hand's inquisitors, Edward swallowed his pride and escaped in a fishing boat to Quartedec. There he raised money for the cause from

sympathetic priests and nobles, and he paid a mage to cast Alter Visage and permanently change his face. Now he's back in the city, reorganizing his people and planning new strikes to avenge Luke, his parents, and all other true Christians the Lazarite scum have killed.

Edward presently maintains an cover identity as a poor dock worker. He is not the only Blood leader, of course – he has a few junior lieutenants who can step into his place.

Edward has restarted Blood of the Martyrs to seek revenge for his parents and other true Christians.

Edward Hook

217 points

Male, age 32. Brown hair, black eyes.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 12 [20].

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 16 [10]; Per 14 [0]; FP 12 [0].

Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 10. 6'1"; 160 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0]; Christian regions [1].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Latin (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Allies (Group of 50 followers; Built on 25%; 12 or less) [20]; Alternate Identity (Illegal) [15]; Patron (Megalan church in Quartedec; 6 or less) [5].

Disadvantages

Fanaticism (Petrine Christian) [-15]; Secret (Leader of Blood of the Martyrs; Possible Death) [-30].

Quirks: Boyish grin; Has a secret library of Latin books (including Bibles); Teaches kids to read; Tells fish stories; Washes hands after touching zombies. [-5]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ [1]-14; Boating/TL3 (Sailboat) (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Current Affairs/TL3 (Politics) (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Fast-Draw (Knife) (E) DX [1]-13; Fishing (E) Per [1]-14; Intelligence Analysis/TL3 (H) IQ [4]-14; Interrogation (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Research/TL3 (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Shortsword (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Streetwise (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Swimming (E) HT [1]-12; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-14; Teaching (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX [1]-13; Traps /TL3 (A) IQ-1 [1]-13.

OGMUND SNORRISON

The younger son of a lower middle-class Northlander merchant family Snorrison grew up on the docks, resenting the second-class status of his people. His own cocky airs got him

in trouble, and his father ended up packing him off to the Northland Guard. He learned how to fight . . . and that he hated to take orders from Ravens. When he got out, he put his skills to work for the Naglfari. Over the last 30 years, he has gradually worked his way up through the organization, eliminated anyone in his way, and carefully invested his earnings in various front businesses.

Some 20 years ago, Snorrison married the daughter of a Northlander shipping magnate who had fallen into debt. This gave him control of a legitimate company, which he later amalgamated with his own interests as the House of Ogmund, a powerful merchant company. Somewhat to his surprise, he also fell in love with his wife and was thrilled when she bore two strapping sons (both now adults working for him) and an adorable daughter (who he still dotes on). Despite his age, he is surprisingly quick on his feet, and he regularly spars with his bodyguards and sons.

Snorrison is best known as the wealthy and influential owner of the House of Ogmund, but his real power lies in the many criminal enterprises he directs. He has become one of the “Hidden Jarls” that control the Naglfari criminal brotherhood. His main interests are protection, loansharking, smuggling, and prostitution rackets in Gebura Town, but he is expanding his operations into the Old City.

His criminal connections are suspected by the authorities, but they are unaware of his high rank in the Naglfari. The Ravens (and indeed the majority of his own employees) believe him to be merely a powerful and ruthless Northlander businessman with underworld links, rather than a major crime lord. He carefully maintains an aura of respectability, cultivating ties with politicians and monastic charities and keeping the streets safe around his own neighborhood.

Recently, some of Snorrison’s activities have been hindered by the Blood of the Martyrs, and he is planning to retaliate.

Ogmund Snorrison

202 points

Male, age 56. Blond hair, gray eyes.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 10 [0].

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 10 [0].

Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 9. Size 6'; weight 193 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Broken) [2]; Latin (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Allies (Group of 44 followers; Built on 25%; 12 or less) [20]; Status 1 [0]*; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Pirates) [-5]; Dependents (Wife, Katla, and daughter, Astrid; No more than 25%; Loved Ones; 6 or less) [-20]; Secret (Naglfari Jarl; Imprisonment or Exile) [-20]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10].

Quirks: Careful planner; Never raises voice. [-2]

Skills

Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Area Knowledge (Gebura Town) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Axe/Mace (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Brawling (E) DX [1]-13; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-13; Current Affairs/TL3 (Abydos and its neighbors) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Diplomacy (A) IQ [4]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-13; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Merchant (A) IQ+2 [8]-15; Observation (A) Per [2]-13; Politics (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Savoir-Faire (Mafia) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Soldier/TL3 (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Streetwise (A) IQ+2 [8]-15.

* Status 1 free with Wealth.

RAGNAR BJORNSSON, HANGED MAN

Ragnar’s parents died when he was young. When he was 13, his uncle nailed him to a tree, telling him to break free or die. Ragnar suffered for hours, praying to Thor for the courage to face death . . . and then the moon rose, and he changed.

As one of the Hanged Men, Ragnar is hired by agents of the various Hidden Jarls whenever they need to deliver a particularly messy message. The Ravens know him only as “the Red Bear” and have linked him to 14 bloody murders. There is a \$10,000 bounty on his hide. When not working as a killer, he spends his time as a fisherman or day laborer. He turns over most of his income without complaint to his extended family.

Ragnar Bjornsson

220 points

Age 20, with red hair and blue eyes.

ST 16 [60]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 14 [40].

Damage 1d+1/2d+2; BL 51 lbs.; HP 16 [0]; Will 13 [15]; Per 12 [10]; FP 14 [0].

Basic Speed 7.00 [10]; Basic Move 7 [0]; Dodge 11*; Parry 12*. 6'3"; 210 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0]; Nomad Lands [1].

Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Alternate Form† (Werebear, *GURPS Banestorm*, p. 201) [30]; Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10].

Disadvantages

Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Secret (Pagan, were, and assassin; Possible Death) [-30].

Quirks: Spendthrift; Worships Odin and Thor in secret. [-2]

Skills

Axe/Mace (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Boating/TL3 (Sailboat) (A) DX-1 [1]-11; Brawling (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Fishing (E) Per [1]-12; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-13; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Streetwise (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Swimming (E) HT [1]-14.

* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

† See p. B456 for black bear form.

RESIDENT EVILS

Over the centuries, magical accidents and experiments have summoned a number of demons into Abydos. A few were cunning or powerful enough to avoid banishment, usually by finding a niche in the wicked city's ecology and occupying it.

GLITTERTOOTH

Glittertooth looks like a handsome man or beautiful woman: tall and fit, with long black hair and piercing eyes. It wears dark, travel-stained leathers and a heavy cloak. Its tone of voice is always low and faintly amused. Glittertooth seems human until opening its mouth: The teeth are diamonds and very sharp.

It walks the streets of Abydos, seeking souls. Glittertooth can sense emotions, and it looks for hopeless people who want revenge. It enjoys finding betrayed lovers, rape victims, battered spouses, and those whose loved ones were murdered. It is a killer-for-hire. Glittertooth charges \$1 – and your soul, which it makes perfectly clear. Only the lost and desperate agree.

It is discriminating and fulfills only a couple of commissions every year. The demon uses its advantages and Mind-Reading spells to help it find and bargain with clients. If a customer agrees to its terms, Glittertooth uses Soul Jar on them. The “jar” is one of the demon's diamond teeth. There is no immediate effect – but if they later die, they can't be resurrected, and their consciousness will awaken to find itself trapped in the demon's tooth, aware and helpless, for eternity.

Glittertooth always does its best to fulfill its commission. It is a deadly assassin: It can change shape and read minds. It studies its targets carefully, plays with them, and then kills them in the most horrific, sadistic, and ironic fashion it can. Its one weakness is that it is a demon.

Example: After a drunken fisherman brutally raped a beggar girl, she hired Glittertooth. In female form, the demon lured the rapist into an alley with the promise of sex, then beat him unconscious. The man awoke tied up in his boat, drifting on the river. The demon told him, “I thought we'd go fishing for our date. I brought a hook, but oops, I forgot bait . . .” Next morning, a group of fishermen found a pile of fish in their friend's boat. When they gutted the fish, they found fingers, toes, and other body parts.

It likes to play cat-and-mouse games. It may use Dream Projection and Alter Body or Visage on victims to horrify them before slaying them.

If slain, Glittertooth's 40 teeth are worth \$1,000 each. Each presently holds several souls, some of people still alive. Glittertooth has been slain or banished before, to reappear in Abydos a few years later. Something attracts it.

Glittertooth

946 points

ST 20 [100]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 15 [50].
Damage 2d-1/3d+2; BL 80 lbs.; HP 45 [50]; Will 16 [15]; Per 13 [0]; FP 20 [15].
Basic Speed 7.00 [0]; Basic Move 7 [0]; Dodge 11*; Parry 12*; Block 11*.
6'; 170 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Hebrew (Native) [6]; Latin (Native) [6].

Advantages

Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Detect 5 (Hopeless anger) [10]; Ambidexterity [5]; Appearance (Handsome) [12]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Dark Vision [25]; Detect (Hopeless anger) [10]; DR 3 [15]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Elastic Skin [20]; Empathy [15]; Extra Attack 1 [25]; Magery 4 [45]; Regeneration (Very Fast) [100]; Teeth (Fangs) [2]; Unaging [15]; Unfazeable [15]; Unkillable 3 [150]; Unusual Background (Arch-Mage) [10].

Disadvantages

Dependency (Mana; Very Common; Constantly) [-25]; Dread (Holy Objects) [-10]; Obsession (12) (Wreak vengeance in exchange for souls) [-10]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Supernatural Features (No Shadow) [-10]; Unnatural Feature (Diamond teeth) [-1].

Quirks: Nasty sense of humor. [-1]

Glittertooth seeks hopeless people who desire revenge.

Skills

Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Brawling (E) DX+3 [8]-16; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-13; Cloak (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-16; Sex Appeal (A) HT-1 [1]-14†; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-15.

Spells‡

Alter Body (H) IQ+8 [20]-21; Alter Visage (H) IQ+8 [20]-21; Climbing (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Clumsiness (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Control Limb (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Counterspell (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Death Vision (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Dream Sending (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Dream Projection (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Dream Viewing (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Fumble (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Hinder (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Lend Energy (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Lend Vitality (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Mind-Reading (H) IQ+4 [4]-17; Mind-Sending (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Minor Healing (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Sense Emotion (H) IQ+3 [2]-16; Sense Foes (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Sense Life (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Sense Spirit (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Shapeshifting (Crow) (H) IQ+2 [2]-15; Soul Jar (VH) IQ+12 [40]-25; Spasm (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Steal Energy (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Steal Vitality (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Summon Spirit (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Touch (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Truthsayer (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Ward (H) IQ+2 [1]-15; Zombie (H) IQ+2 [1]-15.

* Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

† Includes +4 from Handsome Appearance.

‡ All spells include +4 from Magery.

THE CAT FAIRY

In Abydos, a woman with an unwanted pregnancy who doesn't wish to risk an abortion will sometimes perform this ritual. She traps a mouse, then hangs it with a strand of her own hair. A few days later, if she's lucky, her pregnancy may painlessly disappear. They say the unborn babe was "taken by the Cat Fairy."

They're right.

The Cat Fairy is a demon. She appears as a woman-sized house cat with black fur and yellow eyes. There's a 2-in-6 chance any offering will be found by one of her children, the hellkittens (see below). After they bring the offering to her, she uses a Seeker spell on the hair-strand to find its owner. Then she comes for the unborn child.

She can turn into shadow and thus enter buildings. If the Cat Fairy is seen by a living soul, she will flee or fight as the situation demands, but she will usually wait until everyone is asleep. After taking a pregnancy, the Cat Fairy retreats to her most recent lair. This is typically the cellar of an abandoned building. A month of pregnancy passes each hour for her, and soon she goes into labor. The baby is born not as a human but as a cat: a hellkitten.

When not collecting fetuses, the Cat Fairy prowls the city at night, seeking more mundane prey to slake her physical hunger. She likes rooftops and back alleys, and she has a taste for dogs, rats, pigeons, and the occasional Roofrat (the two-legged kind). She can speak – with a creamy, purring voice – but she rarely does so. She will bargain with humans to protect her own existence and that of her kittens.

The Cat Fairy

557 points

ST 18 [48]*; **DX** 17 [84]*; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 15 [50].
Damage 1d+2/3d; BL 65 lbs.; HP 25 [14]; Will 16 [20];
Per 16 [20]; FP 18 [9].
Basic Speed 8.00 [0]; Basic Move 8 [0]; Dodge 12†.
5.5"; 120 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Abydos [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (Native) [6]; Hebrew (Native) [6]; Latin (Native) [6].

Advantages

Allies (Hellkittens; Built on 25%; 11-20; 9 or less; Minion) [12]; Appearance (Attractive) [4]; DR 2 [10]; Catfall [10]; Claws (Sharp Claws) [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Dominance (Only on transferred fetuses she has given birth to, as described above, -80%) [4]; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground) [20]; Magery 3 [35]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Indomitable [15]; Regeneration (Very Fast) [100]; Shadow Form [50]; Silence 3 [15]; Super Jump 2 [20]; Teeth (Sharp) [1]; Unaging [15].

Perks: Fur; Shorter Gestation. [2]

Disadvantages

Bestial [-10]; Callous [-5]; Dependency (Mana; Very Common; Constantly) [-25]; Dread (Holy Objects) [-10]; Obsession (12) (Steal unborn children and transform them) [-10]; Quadruped [-35]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Wealth (Dead Broke) [-25].

Skills

Area Knowledge (Abydos) (E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-19; Shadowing (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-19; Tracking (A) Per+1 [4]-17.

Spells‡

Accelerate Pregnancy§ (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Apportation (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Ease Labor§ (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Lend Vitality (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Remove Fetus§ (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Seek Food (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Seek Water (H) IQ+1 [1]-13; Seeker (H) IQ+3 [4]-15; Transfer Pregnancy§ (H) IQ+6 [16]-18.

* Includes No Fine Manipulators, -40%.

† Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

‡ All spells include +2 from Magery.

§ Detailed in *GURPS Bio-Tech* (pp. 30-33).

The Cat Fairy's Pregnancy Spells

The Cat Fairy rarely uses Ease Labor or Remove Fetus; she has Remove Fetus as a prerequisite for Transfer Pregnancy (first introduced in *GURPS Bio-Tech* and summarized here).

Transfer Pregnancy

Regular; Resisted by HT

This spell transfers an embryo or fetus from mother to the mage's own womb, or from the mage to another female's womb. At higher energy cost, it can also transfer to a male, creating a temporary womb, although any birth must be through cesarean section or Remove Fetus spell. The subject of the spell (not the fetus or embryo) resists, whether the fetus or embryo is being transferred to or from it.

Duration: Permanent (until baby is born).

Cost: 4 for an embryo, double for a fetus. Double energy cost to transfer to or from an artificial container. Triple energy cost if person receiving the fetus is male.

Prerequisites: Remove Fetus and Magery 2+.

HELLKITTENS

These half-demon cats roam the night in Abydos. They look and behave like ordinary house cats, but are strong and smart. They are attractive and tend to let themselves be adopted by a particular human, often a teenager, as pets.

They prefer to sleep on their owner's bed, curled up with them, purring quietly. Someone who lets a hellkitten sleep with her experiences odd dreams. These are always power-fantasies in which she relives wrongs done to her – and then goes on humiliate and torture the perpetrator. If the person keeps the hellkitten with her, the dreams continue, getting more sadistic and bizarre.

Victims who spend time with hellkittens often develop Sadism as a disadvantage, and they become compelled to act out their dreams.

*Those who befriend hellkittens
often become sadistic.*

The Cat Fairy will seek revenge against anyone who she learns has mistreated or killed a hellkitten.

ST: 6	HP: 6	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 10	Move: 10
IQ: 7	Per: 12	Weight: 10 lbs.
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: -2
Dodge: 11	Parry: N/A	DR: 1

Claws (14): 1d-2 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: Affliction 1 (Area Effect, 2 yards; Based on Will; Disadvantage, Sadism and Nightmares (12); Emanation; Extended Duration, Permanent; Malediction; Onset, Exposure Time, 1 day); Catfall; Claws (Sharp); Combat Reflexes; Night Vision 5; Quadruped; Striking ST 5; Teeth (Sharp).

Skills: Jumping-16; Stealth-18.

ADVENTURES IN ABYDOS

Abydos can be used as the setting of a single adventure, or an entire campaign can be developed in and around it. Despite its sinister aura, the city is quite suited to serve as a continuing home for a party of adventurers.

Agents of Christendom

Abydos is the perfect destination for Petrine Christian knights or clergy on a dangerous mission.

Templar Treasure: The Masons' Guild Hall in Abydos is built overtop the ruins of a chapterhouse of the Knights Templar. The adventurers or their patron may find old Templar documents that hint at a secret underground level beneath it. When Lady Ravenjoy and the Lazarites took power, the Templars sealed and hid it using Earth magic and Scryguard spells to protect their treasures . . . what powerful artifacts or saintly relics might exist there now? There could also be guardians: magical traps, golems or even sleeping Templar knights, buried for 400 years but kept alive through Suspended Animation.

Blood Brothers: Adventurers working for the Curia may be sent to Abydos to assist the Blood of Martyrs – or perhaps to investigate rumors that they have degenerated from Christian patriots into common criminals and, if so, to set things right.

Pirates of the Styx

Swashbuckling adventurers may choose to sail as privateers on either side of the undeclared naval conflict between Abydos and Quartedec. Or they might be innocently traveling across the Styx on a merchant vessel when the lookout sights a war galley with a Raven banner. Can they defeat a ship commanded by necromancers and crewed by the undead? Or will they be carried in chains to Abydos to serve as slaves, flesh scrolls, or worse?

Rescue Missions

Travelers who encounter Abydos' privateers or simply run afoul of bandits or Nomad Territory barbarians may be captured and sold as slaves. The unlucky could end up as a necromancer's youth battery or in the Flesh Library; others may

simply find themselves in a very strange and dangerous city. Anyone arrested for crimes or heresy may face the Silent Maze or the Chamber of Melting Souls.

Players usually don't enjoy it when their characters are captured, but if a friend of the PCs is seized, or they are hired to rescue someone, the party may have to infiltrate Abydos to retrieve them. They may know only that the person was sold as a slave, not what happened to them. Discovery of their true fate could come as a shock. Someone whose youth was stolen, who was mutilated and cast into the Maze, or who was made into a Flesh Scroll can be healed magically – but would he still be sane?

Not all captives may be lucky enough to remain alive; troublesome slaves are often killed. The adventurers might encounter a pretty zombie waitress serving drinks in their inn, only to realize it is the merchant's daughter they were to rescue. Their client may want the body returned for a decent Christian burial, or he might wish to change the mission from rescue to revenge.

Treasure Hunting

Adventurers and thieves may be drawn by rumors of great treasures in the Cathedral of St. Lazarus or Ravensbeak Tower. The biggest prize is the original Book of the Renewed Testament. Besides being covered in gold and jewels, it is a major relic. The Curia would love to acquire it, both to confound the heretics and so their scholars could study it and find proof that it is a fake or forgery. Of course, the Church of Lazarus would devote their every resource to recovering it and punishing the thieves, but if necessary, they would also pay a huge ransom for it! Other examples of the masterpieces of fine art produced in Abydos would also fetch a high price from eccentric collectors, such as decadent Megalan nobility.

Join the Guards!

There's no reason for PCs to be enemies of Abydos. Adventurers could be natives, born and bred in its peculiar ethos, patriotically defending their home and faith from Petrine heretics or domestic enemies. Some foreign immigrants may

also be drawn to Abydos, such as female mages or warriors who seek equal opportunities. The Ravens, Northland Guard, and Eumenides Guild are eager for new recruits: As city cops or bounty hunters, the PCs can fight the Naglfari, fanatic Bloods and foreign spies; unmask magical mysteries (like the fate of Donovan Hawk's wife); bust ghosts and demons; and butt heads with rival organizations such as the Hand of Glory. This could turn into either a grim "dark city cops" campaign or a light-hearted "three musketeers with spells" romp. For a unique challenge, they can try to keep headstrong teenage wizards of St. Magdalene's from destroying the town with magic during the School's End festival.

The Underworld

The Abydos underworld, with its feuding "Viking Mafia" Naglfari families, Hanged Men, Blood terrorists, Roofrat gangs, dueling student mages and demon assassins is another option for a dark fantasy campaign. Players can work for (or lead) their own Naglfari family, Blood of the Martyrs cell, or Roofrat gang. Alternatively, they could be simply freelance thieves or assassins operating for whomever pays the best.

Off to College

Adventurers may be foreign or native students who study magic at St. Magdalene's. They could become pawns in battles between rival masters, join the various clubs or found their own, fight duels or befriend fellow students, discover the truth behind the Society of Solomon, learn forbidden spells, and borrow (or fall in love with?) flesh scrolls. Perhaps their rooming house is haunted or the teashop or inn they frequent is being shaken down by the Naglfari.

Adventure Beyond the Walls

Introductions: In an existing *GURPS Banestorm* campaign, the PCs may not have heard of Abydos. Before they ever visit the city, GMs may wish to take time to spread rumors of its existence. A treasure hoard might include Abydos' "dead crow" coins, leading adventurers to wonder where they came from or why merchants fear to take them. A minstrel, old wife, or northern sailor might tell blood-curdling tales of raven witches, the Flesh Library, or undead pirates. Ancient books or maps may mention Megalos's early struggles with Abydos, or even show the city as part of the empire. PCs may also encounter the influence of Abydos well beyond the city.

Intrigue in Quartedec: Adventurers who visit the Megalan city of Quartedec could stumble by accident upon one of the Lazarite Church's schemes to weaken the earldom. Archbishop Narses' (pp. 46-47) description has an example of one such plan. It's unlikely the archbishop himself would leave the city, but the puppet master may employ agents like Brother Demetrios (pp. 50-51) or hire local pawns.

Cults of Lazarus: A missionary necromancer-priest of the Lazarite faith has left the island and begun preaching, establishing a secret Cult of Lazarus in an isolated village, among a decadent elite, or even among orcs or other nonhumans! Adventurers might stumble on fanatical zombie-raising cultists who will kill to preserve their secrets, or a kind-but-crazy Lazarite preacher whose biggest danger is getting himself and any deluded followers killed by an angry mob!

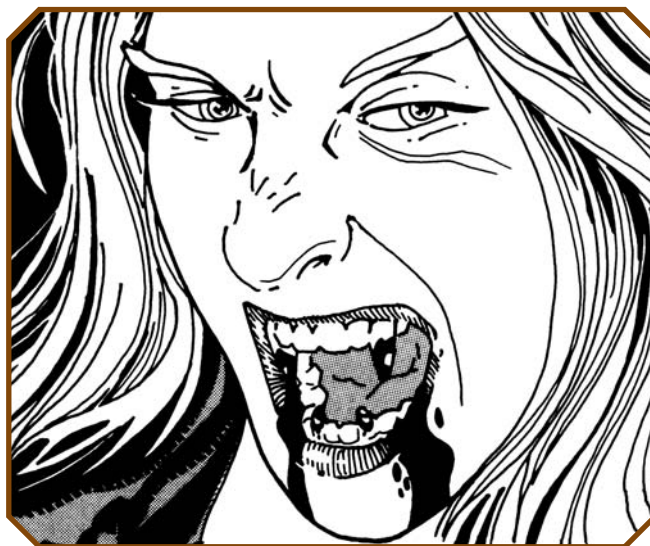
Rose Crusade: For a lark, members of the Rose Society, led by Megethia Andronica (pp. 53-54), sail to the mainland

and infiltrate a small Megalan town on the shores of Lake Styx to shop, party, or raise magical havoc.

To Catch a Thief: An Abydos rogue steals a valuable artifact and flees the city but Captain Anastasia Psilena (pp. 49-50) is in hot pursuit. Local adventurers could find themselves on either side: hired by the fugitive or his fence as bodyguards, or by the Raven who needs local help to operate in a foreign city.

The Abydos Connection: PCs investigating criminal activities in a Megalan town near Lake Styx may discover signs of Abydosian money and influence. This isn't the Hand of Glory: It's a Naglfari operation led by Jarl Ogmund Snorrison (pp. 54-55), who have made a connection with a local thieves' guild in order to smuggle goods between Abydos and Megalos. Perhaps the Naglfari have even loaned out some of their Hanged Men like Ragnar Bjornsson (p. 55) or zombies to help their new allies take control of rival gangs or terrorize local authorities.

Strangers in a Strange Land: What if master Prospectus Blake's (pp. 52-53) experimental angel-summoning spell instead conjured PCs from Earth or another world? Materializing inside a pentagram with a startled master mage and his students, the Ministry of Serendipity may be the least of their worries!



Vampires of Abydos: Most vampires in Yrth live a lonely and secretive existence. Rumors of a religious order that accepts the undead may spread beyond Abydos, possibly attracting any vampire characters who seek a new path . . . as well as vampire hunters eager to destroy a nest of undead! A long quest could lead these seekers to the Monastery of the Holy Blood (p. 45). Alternatively, zealous vampire-monks may venture forth from the monastery in search of foreign vampires offering them a choice: Convert to the true faith, or be destroyed!

Prodigal Sons: A character living outside Abydos might be a former native of the city, perhaps having fled to escape powerful enemies or bad memories. Such an origin could justify unusual PC background choices, such as a necromancer-priest or female warrior-mage. A native might keep his background secret, especially if he still follows the Lazarite faith. Or he might be a zealous convert to Petrine Christianity (and perhaps also a trained necromancer, if he converted late in life!) ashamed or hostile toward his former homeland, willing to warn others of its wicked ways. But shadows from his past may eventually come back to haunt him!

INDEX

- Abastor Square, 38.
 Abydos, historical, 17.
 Admission to college, 24.
 Adventures, 58-59.
 Agartha, 4, 5.
 Agarthan ethnic group, 8.
 Alchemists' Guild, 27.
 Ambrose Street, 32.
 Anchor Street, 44.
 Andronica, Megethia, 41, 53-54.
 Andronicus Road, 32.
 Balcony at Ravensbeak Tower, 42.
 Bay of Lemures, 4, 11.
 Bethlehem Road, 32.
 Birth rate, 13.
 Bjornsson, Ragnar, 55.
 Blake, Master Prospectus, 33, 52-53.
 Blasphemy, 14.
 Blood of the Martyrs, 19, 28-29, 54; *typical*, 29.
 Bloodless Arena, 16, 34, 44.
 Bogbottom Dump, 34.
 Bogiron Alley, 33.
 Boneflower inn, 39-40.
 Boneshanks, 42, 47-48.
 Brand Arisson's Shop, 40.
 Bridgegate Road, 45.
 Carl of the Naglfari, typical, 29.
 Carrying arms, 14.
 Cat Fairy, 57; *spells*, 57.
 Cathedral of St. Lazarus, 7, 15, 18, 41.
 Celestine Road, 32-33.
 Chamber of Melting Souls, 42.
 Characters, 45.
 Charon Bridge, 43-44.
 Chronology, 16-19.
 Church of Lazarus, 6-7, 14, 22; *views on Curia*, 7.
 Church of St. Samuel Hood, 45.
 Church law, 14.
 Church saints, 7.
 Citadel of Birds, 15, 20, 42.
 Clay Street, 33.
 Clergy, 7, 9, 17, 22; *typical*, 22.
 Cobble Road, 33.
 Commoners, 9.
 Corpseflayers' Guild, 28.
 Counties of Agartha, 4.
 Criminals, 28-29.
 Crown of Thorns restaurant, 35-36.
 Culture of the city, 15-16.
 Curia, 7, 8, 17-19, 28; *views on Abydos*, 7, 9, 10; *see also Petrine Church*.
 Currency, 12.
 Curriculum of the college, 24.
 Customs of the city, 15-16.
 "Dead crows" (coins), 12.
 Deathless Monks, 23, 45, 50-51; *oath*, 23; *template*, 23.
 Defenses, 11, 20-22.
 Degrees awarded by the college, 24.
 Demetrios, Brother, 45, 50-51, 54.
 Demons, 14, 43, 56-58.
 Diabolism, 14.
 Disease, 9.
 Docks, 44.
 Doctors in Abydos, 13, 34, 39.
 Doctrine of the Church, 6-7.
 Dogs, 33.
 Doukaina, Sophia, 15.
 Drusiana, Lady, 15.
 Duels, 14, 25.
 Dungeon, 42.
 Dwarves, 8, 25, 33, 39, 45; *saint of*, 7, 16; *trade with*, 10, 11.
 Economy, 12.
 Electors, 5.
 Elixirs, new, 27.
 Elysium elixir, 27.
 Enoch Road, 33-34.
 Ethnicity, 8.
 Eumenides Guild, 14, 22, 27, 37, 58.
 Eye in the Cloud book shop, 33.
 Faculty of the college, 25.
 False Resurrection spell, 27.
 Felicia Hill's Shop, 40.
 Festivals, 16.
 Fine arts, 15-16.
 Flesh Library, 26-27, 38, 52.
 Flesh scrolls, 19, 26-27, 52.
 Foreign relations, 9-11.
 Foreign visitors, 10-11.
 Founding of Abydos, 5, 16.
 Fowlmarket Road, 34.
 Freyja's Cats brothel, 44.
 Gabrielle Boneshanks, Lady Raven, 42, 47-48.
 Gangs, 28-29.
 Garden of Tenelope, 34.
 Gates, 30.
 Gebura Town, 44-45.
 Gentry, 8-9.
 Geography, 4.
 Ghent, Guildmaster Tobias, 40, 51.
 Ghost Troupe, 16.
 Ghost Wind spell, 27.
 Glabras, Philopos, 15.
 Glittertooth, 56.
 Gorice Hall, 41.
 Gorice Road, 35.
 Gorice Road Theater, 16, 35.
 Government, 5, 14-15.
 Grendel Road, 34-35.
 Guilds, 27-28, 51.
GURPS Banestorm, 3, 23, 43, 51, 55, 59; **Bio-Tech**, 57; **Fantasy**, 4; **Magic**, 43.
 Hall of Justice, 36.
 Hand of Glory, 14, 15, 19, 23, 45, 50, 54.
 Hanged Men, 29, 55.
 Hawk, Senator Donovan, 41, 49.
 Health and disease, 9.
 Hecate Club, 26, 45.
 Hellkittens, 57-58.
 Heresy, 14.
 History, 16-19.
 Holidays, 16.
 Holy Blood, Order of, *see Deathless Monks*.
 Holy orders, 7, 9, 17, 22.
 Hood, Samuel, 7, 6, 16, 17, 44.
 Hook, Edward, 19, 28, 54.
 Hourglass Road, 35.
 House of Angerbod, 37.
 House of Dr. Gideon Balsamon, 34.
 House of Eleazar, 39.
 House of Ghent, 40.
 House of Ogmund, 40-41.
 House of Prospectus Blake, 33.
 House of Starkad Kolsson, 37.
 Idolatry, 14.
 Industry, 12.
 Infernal Devices, 35.
 Iscariot, Judas, 7, 23, 29, 32.
 Jack-in-Irons inn, 39.
 Jarl of the Naglfari, 29, 55.
 Jews, 8, 11, 39.
 Jon of Kadia's Shop, 41.
 Judas Iscariot, 7.
 Judd Verminsbane's Shop, 43.
 Kadia House, 41.
 Kadia's Way, 35-36.
 Kerberus House, 36.
 Knackery, 40.
 Knights, 22.
 Lady Raven, 5, 16; *specific women*, 5, 16-19, 42, 47-48; *see also Ravens (Guards)*.
 Lake Styx, 4, 5.
 Law, 14-15, 42-43.
 Lazarite Church, *see Church of Lazarus*.
 Lazarus Awakens painting, 15, 41.
 Lazarus, biblical, 6.
 Lazarus Clark, Copyist shop, 32.
 Lazarus Hall, 38.
 Legion of the Polished Bone, 11, 18-20, 30, 36, 42; *description*, 21.
 Lemures, 4.
 Lesser Zombie spell, 27.
 Lich Merchants' Guild, 28.
 Lich Street, 36-37.
 Loaves and Fishes food stand, 35.
 Lodin Forkbeard's Smithy, 33.
 Lostgate Road, 37.
 Lostgate Tower, 27, 37.
 Lost Gospels of Lazarus, 6.
 Magic and the law, 14.
 Makarios the Pious, 16.
 Mana level, 4.
 Mandrake's Thirst tavern, 44.
 Map of the city, 31.
 Master William Auric's Shop, 32.
 Meat market, 37.
 Megalos, 9-10.
 Michael Kalamanos Square, 36.
 Militia, 22.
 Monastery of St. Judas Iscariot, 32.
 Monastery of the Holy Blood, 23, 45.
 Morgarten, Michael, 15.
 Mother Gramble's Rooming House, 35.
 Naglfari, 19, 27-29, 37, 40, 44, 55, 59; *typical carl*, 29; *jarl*, 29, 55.
 Narses the Pious, Archbishop, 7, 19, 46-47.
 Necromancy, effects of use, 12-13.
 Nicasia House, 26, 38.
 Nicodorus, Abbot, 45.
 Nightingale, Canidia, 15, 35.
 Nomad Lands, 10.
 Norse paganism, 8.
 Northgate Street, 38-39.
 Northgate Tenements, 38.
 Northland Guard, 11, 18, 21, 30.
 Northlanders, 8, 11.
 Northmen's Block, 45.
 Oakenbeard, Gilli, 7, 16.
 Office of Magister Abraham ben Jacob, 39.
 Old City, 32-41.
 Old Temple Road, 39.
 Opal Lane, 39-40.
 Order of the Holy Blood, *see Deathless Monks*.
 Organization of the Church, 7.
 Other nations of Yrth, 10.
 Other religions, 7-8.
 Pagans, 8.
 Petrine Church, 7, 11, 54; *see also Curia, Blood of Martyrs*.
 Psilena, Raven Captain Anastasia, 49-50.
 Pirates, 22, 58.

- Poor Brothers of St. Judas
Isariot, 23, 32; *typical*, 23.
Population, 8, 13.
Preservation of the Dead elixir, 27.
Priests, 7, 9, 17, 22; *typical*, 22.
Privateers, 22, 58.
Proctors, 25, 26, 38.
Punishments, 15.
Qlippoth, 8.
Quartedec, 10.
Ragamuffin Scrag, 37.
Rapier fencing, 12, 19.
Ravenjoy, Lady Raven Nicasia, 5, 16-19.
Ravens (guards), 5, 10, 11, 14-15, 18-21, 23, 42, 58-60; *typical captain*, 49-50; *typical guard*, 20-21.
Ravensbeak Tower, 42.
Ravensmarch, 10, 19.
Rebels, 28-29.
Resurrection spell, 7.
River Charon, 4, 11, 43-44.
River reeks, 43.
Roofrats, 29.
Rose and Serpent inn, 35.
Rose Society, 12, 19, 25, 53, 59.
- Sabelia, Doctor, 25-27, 38, 51-52.
Sad Agnes' Well, 35.
Saints of the Church, 7.
Samael's Court, 37.
Sardis, 4.
Senate, 5, 36.
Shop of Aethera Chessman, 44.
Shop of Helga Mousakina, Master Mortician, 36.
Shop of Joshua Kane, 40.
Shop of Tom and Paul Malakes, 36.
Silent Maze, 15, 42-43.
Simon Wickman's Shop, 32.
Sisters of Magdalene, 24.
Skeletons, 11, 13, 21, 34, 37; *typical guard*, 21; *typical horse*, 22; *typical knight*, 22; *see also Zombies*.
Slaughter Row, 40.
Slaves, 9.
Snorrison, Ogmund, 40-41, 54-55.
Social class and status, 8-9.
Society of Solomon, 25, 36, 51.
Spells, new, 27, 57.
St. Dunstan's Row, 33.
St. Magdalene's Church, 38.
- St. Magdalene's College, 24-27, 38, 58.
St. Magdalene's Convent, 38.
St. Magdalene's Road, 38.
St. Martha's Road, 38.
St. Samuel's Street, 45.
St. Stephen's Street, 45.
Status and social class, 8-9.
Stephanos, Praetor Basil, 19, 48-49.
Student body, 25-26.
Student societies, 25-26.
Stylites, 16.
Tagarina, Chancellor Patricia, 25.
Tanners' Row, 40.
Taxes, 12.
Tech level, 12.
Template, new, 47.
Temple Road Synagogue, 39.
Tenemos, 4.
Thanatos' House of Bestial Revenants, 37.
Theatrical arts, 16.
Thulin's Folk, *see Dwarves*.
Tithes, 12.
Tower of Faith, 45.
Towers of the city, 30.
Transfer Pregnancy spell, 57.
- Twins (landmark), 41-43.
Undead, *see Necromancy, Legion of the Polished Bone, Skeletons, Zombies*.
Unnaturally extended lives, 12-13.
Using setting in existing campaign, 58.
Vampires, 23, 45, 59.
Vat Road, 40.
Venture Street, 40-41.
Verdandi Road, 41.
Violations of canon law, 14.
Voting franchise, 5.
Walls surrounding the city, 30.
Windspider Hill, 41.
Windspider House, 41.
Wolfskull inn, 44.
Works of art, 15-16.
Yuki's Teashop, 45.
Zeldornia, 4.
Zombies, 12, 13, 15, 16, 22, 28, 32, 37; *as defense*, 11, 18, 22, 27; *law and*, 14, 15; *new spell*, 27; *views of Lazarite Church about*, 6, 7; *see also Skeletons*.
Zombie Body template, 47.

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